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Kent on Sunday

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East edition No 771

POLITICS

Brazier blames 'naive students' for defeat

Former MP hits out following his shock toppling

FUNERAL

Queen's tearful farewell to Countess

Senior royals pay their last respects following her death

COURT

Killed in a car park

Tributes for victim as 25-year-old appears in court on murder charge

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Dignity in defeat is what can define a real winner

WHEN Canterbury fell to Labour at the general election the sense of shock and surprise at such a true blue seat being whipped from the Conservatives' grasp, was felt by everyone.

Most of all by Sir Julian Brazier, who for 30 years had sat of a fat majority and unlike most other professions, must have enjoyed quite remarkable job security.

Speaking to us this week, he points the finger of blame fairly and squarely at students who, he believes, were bought off by Jeremy Corbyn and his promises to make university education free again. Much like it was when Sir Julian was a boy.

But to do so rather underlines what so many in his constituency felt about him. Namely that he was rather out of touch with the man on the street.

Because, regardless of your normal political tendencies, to simply blame activating a supporter base is hardly a cause for sour grapes by those they rise up and defeat. That is, after all, politics for you.

Whether you're protecting pensions, middle England or the poor, you are looking to deliver your ideology and that will benefit some and have a negative impact on others. And Sir Julian must surely be aware of that. As, given the results across the country, he must also be aware of when it comes to the decreasing popularity of Tory policy.

In short, blaming the 'youth of today' is a knee-jerk, far too simplistic mechanism which is deployed by anyone and everyone over a certain age.

The remarkable result in Canterbury and the election as a whole, demonstrated a shift, once more, in the nation's mood.

For those defeated by it, a rather more dignified reaction should be expected.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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PAGE 20 »


PAGE 19 »


PAGE 09 »


PAGE 33 »


PAGE 12 »


PAGE 05 »

Contents

News

05 **Chatham victim named**
Tributes paid to student killed

09 **Cobra leaves man in coma**
Hospital fighting to save pet owner

11 **College pulls out of site**
Uncertainty over Broadstairs building

12 **Lives will be lost, warning**
Comes after a spate of crimes targeting our ambulance service

14 **Brazier in student blast**
Fallen MP blames the young for his defeat

18 **OAP's £25k charity goal**
One woman and her fundraising efforts

19 **Tears of a Queen**
Royals pay sad final farewell to Countess Mountbatten

20 **How magic never dies**
The incredible love affair with Harry Potter continues


PAGE 22 »

22 **Dunkirk: Time for visit**
We take a trip to historic French town

The Arts

33 **County Show ups security**
All visitors will be checked on entering

36 **Flashdance is returning**
Musical heads back to our theatres on tour

Plus

Letters Page 40
Images of Kent Page 41
Sport Page 47

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Student with 'beautiful soul' killed in car park

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk



DEATH: Tributes have been paid to Molly McLaren

TRIBUTES have been paid to "a beautiful soul" with a "heart of gold" who was murdered in a frenzied attack in a shopping centre car park this week.

Molly McLaren, 23, was killed on Thursday outside Dockside Outlet Centre in Chatham after sustaining injuries consistent with a stabbing.

A 25-year-old man has been charged with her murder after officers were called to the scene of the assault in the dockside area of Maritime Way just after 11am.

A number of cars at the centre were contained within a huge police cordon, where officers had to escort drivers to their vehicles throughout the afternoon.

Miss McLaren, an exercise, sport and health education student at the University of Kent, was from Cobham, near Gravesend, and worked at The Leather Bottle pub in the village.

Staff said they were "too upset" to comment when contacted by KoS, but a statement posted on Facebook read: "RIP our lovely Molly, our thoughts and prayers go out to her family at this awful time.

"It was a pleasure to know you and work along side such a beautiful soul."

Others took to social media to pay tribute to Miss McLaren, who had previously worked as a receptionist at Rural Retreat Beauticians in Shorne.

She also worked in financial consultancy at Devere and Partners, as a waitress at The Ship Inn in Gateshead and sales roles at retailers Ted Baker and John Lewis.

One friend said: "Most loveliest down to earth girl I've met, heart of gold. Gone too soon."

Another described her as "such a lovely, kind and cheerful person".

Joshua Stimpson, 25 and of High Street in Wouldham, Rochester, was arrested at the scene on suspicion of murder and charged on Friday, when he appeared at Medway Magistrates' Court.

He was remanded in custody to appear at Maidstone Crown Court on Monday, July 3.

The victim and the suspect were known to each other and enquiries into the incident remain ongoing.

As part of those enquires, any previous reports made by the victim to Kent Police regarding the suspect will form part of the murder investigation.

The force has referred the matter to the Independent Police Complaints Commission and they will determine whether there is a requirement for them to investigate.

Boost as Arts Council injects £11.5m into our cultural experiences

ARTS and cultural organisations in Kent including the likes of Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust and Turner Contemporary have received a slice of £11.5m in funding from Art Council England.

The cash, spread over four years between 12 organisations in the county, is to boost the council's 2018-22 National Portfolio, as it hopes to reach more people in more places than ever before with ambitious art and culture.

The full list of recipients includes 1927, Applause Rural Touring, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, Choestion Plus Kent, Creative Foundation, English Folk Expo, Gulbenkian Theatre, Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company, Open School East, People United, Turner Contemporary and Whitstable Biennale.

The Gulbenkian in Canterbury, People United and the Turner in Margate have all been awarded increased investment for additional work.

The Gulbenkian will receive an additional £53,769 each year for its work with ART31, which empowers children and young people to make decisions about their art and cultural provision, People United, also in Canterbury, is being given an additional £43,547 each year to increase the reach and impact of its work, and Turner Contemporary will receive an additional £94,512 per year for a digital change programme.

An increased investment of more than £1.5m per year in Kent reflects the depth and breadth of the county's cultural offer and highlights the Arts Council's continuing commitment to investing more money than ever before outside London.

Hedley Swain, area director, south east, Arts Council England said: "It will reach into more places than ever before, providing more people of all ages and backgrounds with the opportunity to participate in the arts – inspiring them as artists, as audiences, or as a mix of both."

Smoker numbers tumble 10 years after public place ban

THE number of smokers in Kent has plummeted by a massive 25 per cent since the government introduced a public places ban a decade ago this weekend.

Saturday marks the 10th anniversary of what bosses describe as the most important public health reform in generations – the ending of smoking in enclosed public places in England.

At the start of the ban, almost 21 per cent of the Kent population smoked, now this has reduced by a quarter to just over 15 per cent of residents. KCC's director of public health, Andrew Scott-Clark said: "Initially, it took a few years to see a steady reduction in smoking but there has been a strong and consistent reduction year-on-year since 2012."

Man 'pretended family died in Grenfell blaze to get £10k'

A BECKENHAM man pretended his family died in the Grenfell Tower fire to get almost £10,000 from the victim relief fund, a court has heard.

Anh Nhu Nguyen claimed he lived in the North Kensington block and his wife and son had died in the blaze, it is said. The 52-year-old allegedly conned charities and the local council, and was given a hotel room, clothing, food, electrical items and cash after he went to Westway Sports Centre, which had been set up as a relief hub, claiming to have lost all his possessions.

He appeared at Westminster Magistrates' Court on Friday before the case was committed to Southwark Crown Court for a hearing on July 28.

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Gambling machines get a stay of execution

A RECOMMENDATION on the future of controversial betting machines on which gamblers can lose as much as £300 every minute has been delayed until October due to the general election.

Campaigners across Kent, in particular Medway, and beyond have battled to reduce the maximum stake on fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) from £100 to £2 and the issue was again raised in the House of Commons on Thursday.

The machines have been dubbed ''the crack cocaine of gambling'' and even the co-founder of Britain's biggest bookmaker, Paddy Power, described them as ''dangerously addictive''. Culture minister Tracey Crouch apologised for the delay.



PYLONS: Controversial route

Richborough decision put back to August

A FORMAL decision on plans for a controversial pylon route in east Kent has been pushed back until August.

The project, known as the Richborough Connection, proposes the construction of a 20km overhead line and pylons, and the removal of an existing UK Power Networks overhead line.

It would carry power from Richborough, near Sandwich - which will be receiving electricity pumped in from Belgium via the Nemo Link - to an electricity sub station in Canterbury.

National Grid submitted the project for approval of the government's planning inspectorate on January 14 last year, which was accepted a month later.

However, Thanet MPs Sir Roger Gale and Craig Mackinlay, as well as then-MP for Canterbury, Sir Julian Brazier, wrote to a number of senior government figures to express opposition, fearing it would "scar" the county's landscape.

Tunbridge Wells MP and business secretary Greg Clark was due to make a ruling last month but this week confirmed it was being extended to August 8.

Energy minister Richard Harrington said: "The decision to set the new deadline is without prejudice to the decisions on whether to grant or refuse development consents for it."

Councils unite to create transport strategy for the entire south east

By Tom Pyman

AN ambitious partnership to transform the transport network across the south east has been launched by council leaders.

Both Kent County Council and Medway Council, along with authorities in Berkshire, Brighton and Hove, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton, Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex, have come together to form a body that will speak with a single voice on the area's transport priorities.

It is believed Transport for the South East (TfSE) will give bosses more clout when looking for funding for major projects - bringing together five local enterprise partnerships to work directly with the Department for Transport.

It will also involve road and rail-builders Highways England and Network Rail, transport operators, transport users and other key interest groups.



PLANS: Boosting transport

A sub-national transport body, TfSE is currently operating in shadow form but intends to secure full government backing and statutory powers within two years.

At the first meeting of TfSE, partners elected Keith Glazier, leader of East Sussex County Council as chairman with Tony Page, deputy leader of Reading Borough Council and representative of the Berkshire Local Transport Forum, as vice-chairman.

TfSE chairman Cllr Glazier said: "The south east is a major driver of the UK economy – contributing over £200 billion a year, more than Scotland and Wales combined.

"But its transport network is creaking so it's vital the government does not take its foot off the pedal in targeting much-needed investment in this area.

"This is why we have come together to highlight the transport priorities for our residents and businesses and find innovative ways of building a truly resilient and modern transport system that will enhance the south east's success.

Medway Council leader Alan Jarrett said: "We are pleased to be working closely with our partners to enhance Medway's roads and those throughout the south east."

Autism priorities all set to be explained

A FORMAL strategy to support adults with autism across Kent will be launched by the county council this month.

In 2010, the government set out a requirement for all local authorities to outline specific future commitments and priorities as described in the National Autism Strategy.

Across Kent, approximately over 13,000 individuals are living with autism and current estimates suggest over half these will have autism in the absence of a learning disability. This strategy addresses these individuals.

The launch event on July 11 will be chaired by Anne Tidmarsh, director for older people and physical disability and will include an introduction by cabinet member for adult social care, Graham Gibbens.

Cllr Gibbens said: ''This strategy outlines our core principles, and our vision for how we can ensure that individuals are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives.''

MP warns to not see Brexit 'as an ideology'

A KENT MP caused a stir in the House of Commons when he told colleagues "Brexit isn't paradise" in a debate on the economy and jobs.

Tonbridge and Malling's Tom Tugendhat, who voted to remain, issued warnings to MPs on both sides of the debate, insisting Britain may divorce from Brussels without the kind of deal sought by the prime minister and her negotiating team.

Mr Tugendhat said: "We must be absolutely honest when we talk about things like the seasonal agricultural workers scheme as a solution.

"Yes it is a bit, but the reality is we need one for the NHS, we need one for tourism, we need one for any number of different engineering and educational places so that we make sure that we do not pay for Brexit with a falling economy.

"We must be absolutely honest that the reality is we cannot guarantee that at the end of 18 months we will get a deal. I ask that we look at Brexit as a reality, not as an ideology."

Honorary degrees for famous faces

FORMER boxing champion Barry McGuigan, comedians Mark Steel and Phill Jupitus, and artist Jonathan Yeo are among those due to receive honorary degrees from the University of Kent at ceremonies at Canterbury and Rochester cathedrals during July.

Mr McGuigan, who for many years has lived near Faversham and is current president of the Professional Boxing Association will receive a doctor of the university degree, in recognition of his contribution to sport, at Canterbury Cathedral on July 11.

Stand-up comic and broadcaster Mark Steel, who was born in Swanley will receive a doctor of arts degree, in recognition of his contribution to British popular culture, at the cathedral on July 10. The same day as quiz show regular Phill Jupitus receives a doctor of arts degree, in recognition of his contribution to popular British culture.

University alumni, the artist Jonathan Yeo will receive a doctor of arts degree, in recognition of his career as an artist, at Rochester Cathedral on July 18.

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Sian Blake's killer told he will die in jail after appeal fails

By Cathy Gordon
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE partner of former EastEnders star Sian Blake has lost a challenge against his whole-life jail sentence for murdering her and their two young children at their Erith home.

Arthur Simpson-Kent, 50, failed to persuade Lord Chief Justice Lord Thomas and two other leading judges at the Court of Appeal in London that the term should be reduced.

He killed Ms Blake, 43, and their sons, Zachary, eight, and four-year-old Amon, after the actress, who was terminally-ill with motor neurone disease, planned to leave him and take the boys with her.

All three were repeatedly hit on the head before being stabbed in the neck or throat by Simpson-Kent, who painted over bloodstains to hide the brutal murders at their family bungalow in December 2015.

He then buried them in the back garden and told relatives and the police they had gone to see friends before fleeing to his native Ghana.

Simpson-Kent, who admitted three counts of murder, was sentenced at the Old Bailey last October by a judge who said he had been left in "no doubt" he should receive the most severe punishment available for his "truly horrific" crimes.



RIP: Ms Blake played Frankie Pierre in 56 episodes of EastEnders between 1996-97

Lord Thomas, Mr Justice Sweeney and Mrs Justice May upheld the decision at a hearing on Tuesday.

Lord Thomas, describing the murders of the three vulnerable victims as horrific and involving "extreme brutality", said the court was "entirely satisfied" that the sentencing judge was entitled to reach the conclusion that it was a case where "just punishment" required the imposition of a whole-life order.

The appeal judges rejected argument on the killer's behalf that a "very long finite" sentence in the region of 40 years would have been sufficient - and would have given him some hope of release once served.

In throwing out Simpson-Kent's challenge, Lord Thomas said that for a whole-life sentence to be imposed the offending must be "exceptionally high".

He said: "We have to look at the whole of the circumstances and to consider whether this was a case where the seriousness of the offending was exceptionally high - we have no doubt that it was."

Jail for 'wet bandit' after burglary raid

A METAL thief who flooded a Snodland property when he stole a hot water tank and copper piping has been sentenced to prison.

Luke Everhurst, 27, and accomplice, Darren McGrath, 27 broke into the vacant property on March 9, 2016, after smashing a rear window.

Everhurst was sentenced to 14 months for burglary. McGrath failed to appear for sentencing and a warrant has been issued for his arrest.

Cab convoy heads towards Dreamland

A CONVOY of 40 black cabs will bring disadvantaged young people and their families from London to Margate's Dreamland on Monday.

Following 2016's successful revival of the tradition, the event will see the procession of cabs, run by the Albany Taxi Charity, head to the park which will open exclusively for the day-trippers.

Tributes to builder

PIOTR Binkowski, 41, has been identified as the man whose body was found behind the Clarendon Hotel in Gravesend on June 22.

A postmortem said the builder, originally for Poland, died through hanging.

A Facebook site set up in his memory has been deluged with tributes from friends and family, describing his a ''lovely gentlemen''.

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End of Jungle behind major drop in illegal immigrants

THE number of suspected illegal migrants held at a detention centre in Dover has fallen by almost 77 per cent, according to a report published this week.

Fresh figures from the Dover Independent Monitoring Board (IMB), in its first annual report on the short-term holding facility at the port's Eastern Docks, show some 8,164 people were detained between July and December 2015.

The large number was attributed to the migrant crisis of that year, which saw people arrive in Kent from the camp known as the 'Jungle' near Calais.

In the same six months of 2016, that number droppped to 1,886 - a fall of well over three-quarters.

Additionally, just 128 people were held for more than 24 hours



in that second half of 2016, compared with 1,011 people 12 months earlier.

However, Peter Finnimore, chair of the IMB board, said: "We are concerned about some people passing through the facility – mainly young women – who might be victims of trafficking and believe ministers should review procedures and take further steps to protect vulnerable people."

Dog DNA pilot scheme is finally let off its leash

THANET's controversial dog DNA registration scheme went live this weekend.

The aim is to build up a DNA database of pets on the isle - so that any disguarded dog waste can be tracked back to the owner.

The council is running the three-month pilot scheme in collaboration with Streetkleen and BioPet Laboratories.

Ultimately the council seeks to drastically reduce the amount of dog waste across the borough, keeping streets, parks and open spaces clean for residents and visitors.

The scheme will focus initially on those areas with the most reported complaints about dog mess and the largest amounts collected and processed by the council's, FIDO (Faeces Intake Disposal Operation) machine. These areas are: Eastcliff and Central Harbour in Ramsgate and Margate's, Cliftonville West and Central wards.

Council members officially launched the scheme in Ramsgate on Saturday.

Owners can register their dogs through a local vet or at one of the mobile registration days which will be taking place this summer; they can also apply online to receive a testing kit to return by post.

Thanet District Council's cabinet member for operational services, Suzanne Brimm said: "DNA registration is not intended solely to catch those responsible for dog fouling, but also to make all owners think about other people and clean up after their pets."

DNA snares arsonist

AN arsonist whose DNA was detected on a fuel cap following a blaze at a Maidstone lorry park has been jailed for 39 months.

Peter Taylor, 61, from Sheerness. started a fire which destroyed one lorry and spread to another after entering the Nil Desperandum lorry park on February 1, 2014.

Walmer dispersal zone

A WEEKEND-long dispersal order for Walmer was set to end at 9am today (Sunday) in a bid to help police tackle anti-social behaviour.

It started on Friday at 5pm and follows complaints of nuisance, anti-social and intimidating behaviour.

Leader's sprinkler call

CANTERBURY City Council leader Simon Cook is urging the government to make it compulsory for timber-framed buildings to be fitted with sprinklers.

He has written to communities minister Sajid Javid in the wake of the Grenfell disaster and 2015 blaze at the Old Tannery in the city.

Historic hall's cash haul

TEMPLE Manor, a 13th century grade I-listed stone hall in Strood built by the Knights Templar has secured a £50,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant to encourage young people to explore its history.

The money was won following a bid by Medway Council.



Coma after snake attack

By Chris Murphy
chris.murphy@archant.co.uk

A 51-year-old man is in a coma in hospital after he was bitten by one of his illegally-held snakes.

Medway Council said he had 16 lethal snakes at his home, and all have now been removed.

One had to be destroyed because it was in such bad shape.

Andrew Taylor was at his home on the Davis estate, Chatham, when one of his pets - a deadly Indian cobra - turned on him two weeks ago.

Close to collapse he made it to his doctor's surgery. The GP realised the seriousness of the situation and paramedics were called and rushed him to Medway Maritime Hospital where he was treated with anti-venom.

It is reported he has been in a coma ever since.

As well as fighting for his life, the local authority says he could be in serious trouble once released because it appears he was not allowed to keep such dangerous creatures at his home.

Medway Council said: "We were contacted by the RSPCA and the National Wildlife Crime Unit concerning a man who had been bitten by a venomous snake at his property.

"Under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, we visited the property and a specialist wildlife company seized 16 venomous snakes on the council's behalf – all of the snakes require a licence to be held under the act.

"The owner did not hold a Dangerous Wild Animals licence for any of the snakes and this is an offence. We understand the owner remains in hospital and we will pursue appropriate action once he is discharged."

The team of experts later found homes for 15 of the snakes at specialist premises where they will be milked to produce anti venom to save the lives of others. One snake was destroyed due to ill health.

The Indian Cobra is one of the so-called 'big four' when it comes to lethal snakes in the world.

The venom attacks nerves causing paralyses of muscles which in turn brings on respiratory failure and heart attacks. Symptoms start to manifest anywhere between two minutes and two hours following a strike.

A spokesman for Medway Maritime Hospital said: "Mr Taylor is in a serious condition."



VENOM: The Indian cobra is a deadly snake whose venom can cause serious problems to those bitten.

over images

A FORMER head teacher of a Kent primary school has been jailed for a year after downloading more than 160,000 child abuse images.

Police found 160,480 images - 293 of which were graded as the most serious 'category A' photos - on his computer at his home in Faversham last November after receiving information the address had accessed the material. He pleaded guilty to making indecent images of children as he appeared before Maidstone Crown Court this week.

He was formerly head at St Mary's Primary in Chilham.

Landlord hit with £4k fine

A SLUM landlord who refused to tackle damp and mould in an unlicensed property he rented out in Dagenham has been fined almost £4,000.

Patrick Okoli from Valley Drive, Gravesend, ignored an abatement notice ordering him to repair the property, within 28 days.

Magistrates convicted him of breaching the enforcement notice and fined £2,000. He must also pay costs of £1,866 and £100 victim surcharge.

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Leader upset as uni pulls the plug on its site in Broadstairs

Council chief says Canterbury Christ Church's decision will hit those 'who can least afford university education'

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

CANTERBURY Christ Church University is set to close its satellite campus in Broadstairs, after a sharp decline in the number of students opting to study in the area.

The university will stop recruiting students to its Thanet base from September 2018 and will relocate courses to its main campus in the cathedral city "over the next few years".

Bosses insist all courses will remain open and new ones will be created as part of wider, longer-term plans to improve the student experience at the university.

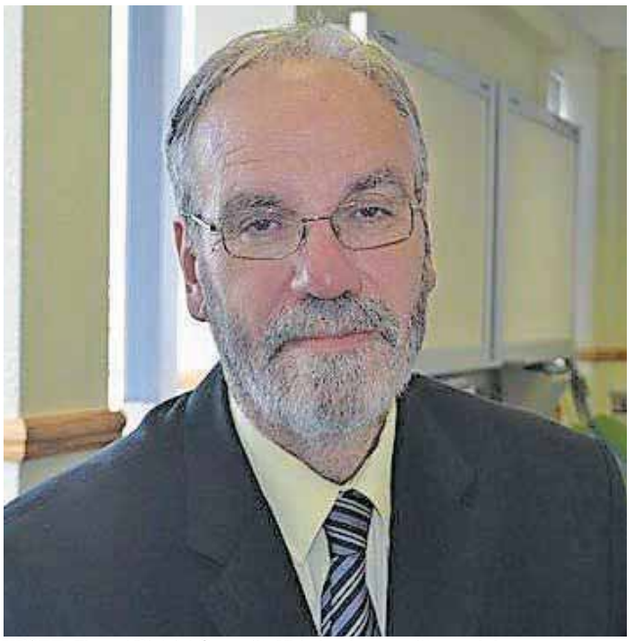
The Broadstairs campus was created in 2000 to provide access to higher education for local people and has managed to attract some 800 students from the area who are currently at the university.

However, chiefs say 650 students from Thanet are choosing to study in Canterbury, compared to just 135 opting for Broadstairs - a figure that has dwindled in recent years.

It points out that as arts and humanities students from Broadstairs are transferred to a new arts building in the city from next year as previously planned, the student community will fall from 400 to around 130, "unavoidably impacting on the quality of the student experience".

The news was met with "disappointment" and "real sadness" by Thanet District Council leader Chris Wells, who described it as a blow to local families.

He said: "I understand their logic, and their limited ability to respond to the swirling changes in their market place, but would still heartily question the social value of their proposals.



UPSET: Thanet District Council's Ukip leader says it's a sad day



CLOSING: The complex, close to Westwood Cross, was only opened in 2000

"When we make decisions, legislation demands that we should consider the equality impacts of our intended changes, and this decision would seem to be a classic example of impact upon those who can least afford university education.

"This will not affect those who are from middle class backgrounds, whose judgement on their university years is about their social as well as educational experience.

"No, this decision will most strongly impact upon those whose decision to attend university is a marginal one. Whose parents worry about their level of debt. Who, as single parents, value the role of a local campus and library closer to home. Those who studies remain squeezed between long hours in care homes and supermarkets to make ends meet."

Cllr Wells, who represents Ukip on the council. said he didn't doubt the university would do all it could to look after affected students, and insisted it wasn't solely to blame, but bemoaned "a consistent imbalance of investment" between the two campuses.

He also suggested the current level of student fees - generally standing at £9,000 a year after a controversial announcement by the coalition government - brought about a changing expectation of university life.

"The power of consumer spending, and the casting of a university education as a consumer-purchased service brings with it levels of expectation of the university experience," Cllr Wells added.

"The university sector's deals on tuition fees have ensured it has suffered far less than other publicly funded bodies in the years of austerity, and the plethora of shiny new buildings in and around university towns is testament to that relative largesse.

"In truth, in the end, it has simply increased the gap between the richer university towns income, and that of the lesser towns and villages whose residents seeking to improve themselves must do so at greater expense and further from their home.

"Such is the legacy of a Labour introduction of tuition fees; and a Tory manipulation of their size and cost.

"I will be meeting with the vice-chancellor soon, and I am sure after our conversation this week he will understand it will not be an easy discussion.

"Whatever else occurs over the next two years, the public money invested in those buildings so hopefully such a short time ago, must be respected, and used for the good of the wider community across Thanet, not just to offset the next shiny addition to a Canterbury campus.

"That is yet to come. Now one's feelings are for those students whose plans for the future are losing heart. It is a far from happy day."

The university insists it remains committed to Thanet and its growth, and says that in particular it will support continued access to higher education to ensure students of all abilities, and from all backgrounds, fulfil their potential.

Bosses say they will continue their close partnerships with east Kent schools and East Kent College to promote opportunities for higher education at CCCU, particularly through outreach activity and the work of the Kent and Medway Progression Federation.

The university also has firm partnerships with health trusts in the east of the county in the delivery of healthcare placements and apprenticeships, and says it will continue its wide range of research projects with local organisations, including Thanet Earth, industry-facing life science laboratories at Discovery Park, and support for arts and cultural organisations, such as Turner Contemporary.

Vice-chancellor Professor Rama Thirunamachandran said: "This decision has been taken after careful consideration and in the best interests of our current and future students.

"I am personally aware of the importance of access to higher education in Thanet, having been involved in the creation of the campus 17 years ago while at the Higher Education Funding Council for England."

Last month, archaeologists at the university uncovered the footings of an ancient church, dating back to the 14th century, on the site of the aforementioned £12m arts building on the city campus.

The arts building will open in September 2018 and will be shared by the schools of media, art and design and music and performing arts.

Bosses say it will house specialist teaching facilities, including space for performance and music, design studios and the latest technology to support new and existing courses.

East Kent College and South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay were contacted for comment but did not respond at the time of going to press.



STUPID: Few can understand why people would look to pinch equipment which can save lives for financial gain, putting the lives of others at risk

‘People could die’ as crooks get a taste for vital ambulance gear

Chris Murphy looks at a rising crime spree which has seen our life-saving equipment stolen to sell on

AMBULANCE chiefs in the county say they fear a growing black market for medical equipment is fuelling a surge in thefts from their premises and vehicles over recent weeks.

And it has now reached such an issue, they say people’s lives could be put at risk.

A string of thefts from Ashford, Sheppey, Thanet and Herne Bay have been compounded by similar crimes in neighbouring Hastings as well as Dorking, Banstead and Tongham in Surrey.

The South East Coast Ambulance Services NHS Foundation Trust (SECAmb) stretches across all three areas and they now fear they are being targeted by crooks who pinch equipment such as defibrillators and then sells them on - often through online sites such as eBay.

Defibrillators have been recognised as a key tool in emergency crews’ arsenal and are vital for kick-starting hearts and saving lives.

SECAmb associate director of operations Sue Skelton said: “The theft of this equipment puts lives at risk and each incident places even greater pressure on our already stretched resources. We are working closely with police on these incidents and would urge anyone with any information whatsoever to come forward.

“It appears that these incidents are part of a targeted campaign against our vehicles and premises.”

DOC Defibrillator provide a range of the vital life-saving gear. It says the targeted thefts date back to 2014 and seem to be on the rise.

A spokesman explained: “The thefts raise the question of why someone will steal a defibrillator?

“We could think that most of the time it is ignorant teenagers or adults that think playing with a defibrillator might be funny.

“What is more alarming is that in most of the cases, thieves consciously stole a defibrillator to sell it back on eBay or Gumtree as a second-hand AED [automated external defibrillator] or break them down and sell the parts as spares.

“It means that they know the equipment, of course, the price and the profit they could make from it but also the properties of the machine.

“They know that a defibrillator is a medical equipment installed in public places to save lives. They are unethically willing to put lives at risks to make money.”

It admits separating the online ads out between legal and illegal is extremely tough.

It said: “To establish the number of stolen defibrillator sold on eBay further research must be conducted.

“Clearly, not all of them are stolen: When a business that has acquired a defibrillator is closing the owner might sell back the defibrillator on eBay and this could benefit the community. That is why it’s hard to make a clear distinction on eBay between a stolen defibrillator and a second-hand defibrillator.”

A quick check of the online auction site this week saw more than 70 on sale.

A spokesman from SECAmb added: “People are benefitting from these thefts in some way.

“The main message we need to get out there is how mindless this is.

“It is putting lives at risk, because if we can’t respond with the right equipment at the right time, it could have a devastating impact.

“And of course it is costing us money replacing everything being taken.”

He added: “The thefts are stupidity. This is not vandalism, which is also a problem. But it appears people are targeting particular pieces of equipment for some obvious benefit. It is certainly affecting us across our region.”

Now the trust is calling on the public to help track down the thieves who have left a string of raided premises and ambulance vehicles.

During June 13 and 14, at Herne Bay, a number of vehicles had their windows smashed and two Community First Responder bags, training equipment and a defibrillator were stolen at some point overnight.

At Sheppey, at around 10pm on June 13, window bars were forced and life-saving equipment was once again stolen from locked vehicles after their windows were smashed. Three vehicles have been left unusable while they are repaired.

At the Ashford Make Ready Centre on June 11, at 11pm, a hole was cut through a metal fence to gain entry to the car park. Equipment was taken from an ambulance but left behind when the thieves were chased off the premises.



TARGET: Defibrillators have been a common victim of the criminals

In addition, SECAmb said two ambulances were vandalised in the early hours of March 31 at Thanet Make Ready Centre leaving them inoperable while they were repaired.

And on May 24 a support vehicle was stolen and later found abandoned by police with un-repairable damage.

Another incident took place at the Hastings Make Ready Centre overnight last Saturday, June 24, with premises in Surrey also targeted.

The previous Wednesday, June 21, the three Surrey raids took place. On each occasion vital life-saving equipment including Lifepaks – manually operated defibrillators and diagnostic machines - were targeted.

A spokesman said: “While every effort has been made to repair and restock vehicles as soon as possible, the incidents have an obvious impact on our ability to respond to patients.”

A spokesman for Kent Police said: “At present we do not know why the machines are being targeted. The recent thefts are being investigated. All the equipment is security marked and registered with the manufacturer and would be difficult to sell on legitimate market sites.

“Any members of the public who have been offered or see medical equipment for sale are urged to contact Kent Police on 101 quoting reference number ZY/24921/17.”

It said officers arrested two men in connection with the theft of medical equipment from ambulances in Kent.

A 26-year-old man from Dagenham, Essex, and a 33-year-old man from Whitstable were both detained on June 13.

The constabulary said they are suspected of stealing equipment from ambulances during separate incidents this month in Ashford, Thanet, Medway and Sheerness.

Both men have been released on bail until July 7 pending further enquiries.

■ **Anyone with any information can call police on 101 or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.**

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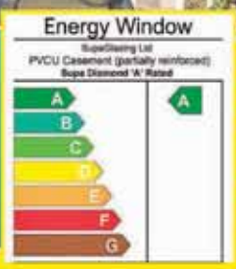


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KOS/15

Brazier: I lost due to naive students falling for a huge bung

As he starts applying for jobs after his shock defeat at the polls, Sir Julian Brazier reveals how he is convinced students sold on a promise of a 'magic money tree' were responsible for him being kicked out of the House of Commons

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

TORY stalwart Sir Julian Brazier attributes his shock general election loss in Canterbury to "naive young people" having their heads turned by a pledge to write off billions of pounds of outstanding student debt.

On a dramatic evening in the cathedral city three weeks ago, Sir Julian, who had served as Conservative MP for the area for 30 years, was stunningly defeated by Rosie Duffield by a narrow margin of just 187 votes.

It was a first ever victory for Labour in a seat the Tories had held since the First World War and one few saw coming, despite a YouGov poll days before the election suggesting Jeremy Corbyn's party may give Theresa May a scare.

As the dust began to settle in the subsequent days, many suggested the result was down to the strong student population in Canterbury, with a number of photos circulating on social media of young people at the city's two universities queuing out the doors at their polling stations.

One of Labour's biggest manifesto pledges was to abolish tuition fees, and Mr Corbyn had also suggested he could completely write off the debt of those who had "the historical misfortune" to be charged £9,000-a-year to attend university under the Conservative and coalition governments since 2010.

Despite the pull of that promise, however, Sir Julian - who received a knighthood in the New Year's Honours list in January for his contribution to politics and public service over the last three decades - held a majority of almost 10,000 two years ago, so a herculean effort was required for Labour to overturn his popularity.

Indeed, speaking to KOS this week, Sir Julian admitted he had little indication prior to the vote that he could find himself out of a job on the morning of June 9.

"I've never made a prediction in any election but I was surprised because two times before in the Tony Blair landslides of 1997 and 2001 I had a feeling on the doorstep that all was not well and still managed to win," he said.

"This time, I didn't have that feeling but there were a very, very large number of students voting who had never done so before.

"A day or two before the election I discovered the YouGov poll but there were various reasons for thinking that was an outlier – they hadn't included postal votes, for example.

"But we then discovered how many people were registering for the first time, and you can't canvas students.

"I think the big thing was they were offering to pay off loans, not just stop fees, and that attracted a lot of naive young people who have not had to balance a budget before in their lives, and believed in the magic money tree."

Along with "strong and stable" and "coalition of chaos", the "magic money tree" became something of a Tory catchphrase during this year's election.

Yet the irony of slamming Mr Corbyn's expensive pledges to prospective voters was not lost on some Conservative critics this week, however, as the prime minister shook hands on a £1 billion deal to buy the support of the Democratic Unionist Party to help her get legislation through the Commons.

Sir Julian, though, feels the two are not comparable: "We had to secure DUP support to do it, and £1bn is a lot for Northern Ireland, but is a small sum for the economy as a whole – just paying off the backlog of student debt is around £37bn."

Born in Dartford, Sir Julian was educated in Oxford and Berkshire and became president of the Oxford University Conservative Association, where he graduated with a BA in mathematics and philosophy.

He then joined the Territorial Army and worked in economic research and corporate finance before entering the world of politics - losing in the 1983 election in Berwick-upon-Tweed before finding success in Canterbury four years later.

Evidently he has remained a popular candidate in the constituency ever since, and even received 2,000 more votes than he did in 2015, but the rise in Labour's share was meteoric.

Leader of the Labour group on Canterbury City Council, Alan Baldock, told us after the election Ms Duffield was "an inspirational candidate" and that was as much of a reason for her triumph as Mr Corbyn's national campaign.

However, Sir Julian insists the difference came from that core support among those 18-24s.

"I thought Rosie came over as very sincere and I'm sure she got some personal votes but she wasn't well-known in the wider constituency," he said.

"The central pitch was this absolutely gi-





OUT: Sir Julian Brazier lost his Canterbury seat after 30 years after Rosie Duffield, right, scooped a sensational victory

gantic sum of money and it seems to have worked – it's a huge, huge bung.

"It's difficult to think of a seat with a big concentration of students we still hold."

Other reasons for Sir Julian's demise, according to the vice-chair of the Kent Labour Students society, was his controversial voting record on issues such as gay marriage.

"It's difficult to find someone who is as regressive, for lack of a better term, than Julian Brazier," said Leon Alleyne-McLaughlin.

Quizzed on whether he thought that also had an effect on how people voted on June 8, the former MP said: "I think there's some truth in that.

"If you take abortion, which was in the Labour literature, schools now, apart from Christrian schools, are teaching children that it's a matter of women's rights and there's no other side of the coin.

"Every religion bans abortion but we've now got a whole generation of young people being brought up to only hear one side of the argument."

At the age of 63, Sir Julian says he is on the hunt for new employment and has submitted three job applications over the last week: one for a lecturing opportunity outside the county, another for a role with a quango and a third for a commercial venture.

"I may no longer be the MP but I'll still keep a close eye on Kent's political landscape," he said.





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The Shetland Pony Grand National

The main Astor Ring will feature 'The Shetland Pony Grand National' on all three Show days. The jockeys, aged between 8 and 13 years old, will entertain the crowds whilst participating in a qualifier for the ultimate Shetland Pony Grand National at the Olympia Horse Show later in the year.

The spectacular sees the children take part in a high-speed dash on their pint size Shetland Ponies - this could have been how some of our racing legends started their careers. The first Shetland Pony Grand National was over twenty years ago and was inspired by the famous Aintree race but on a miniature scale. Since then it has become a firm favourite with audiences from all over the UK; this year they will be raising funds for the Bob Champion Cancer Trust.

The young riders mirror their older counterparts with full silks and racing colours, albeit their tiny steeds being a maximum height of 42 inches. Spectators will be able to cheer on their favourite horse and jockey during the two and half laps of the ring which incorporates 12 miniature Aintree fences and includes the famous Becher's Brook (the notorious fence at the real Grand National which has a 6ft 9in drop).

A True Champion at the Show

The Kent County Show is delighted to welcome the legendary jockey Bob Champion to the Show this year. In the 1980's Bob and his horse Aldaniti, rode into the jaws of death together and then came out the other side and into the hearts of the nation.

Bob Champion made his Grand National debut in 1971, aged 23, aboard Country Wedding; it was a less than auspicious introduction to Aintree. He was brought down at the first fence by Gay Trip, who'd won it the year before, so he never got the chance to jump Becher's Brook.

His first clear round was in 1973 on Hurricane Rock, when he finished in fifth place behind the infamous Red Rum. It was this first clear round that gave Bob the ambition to win the Grand National and he set about finding a horse to help him fulfil the dream.

But Champion's hopes of ever climbing into the saddle again, let alone winning the Grand National, appeared remote when, at the age of 31, he was diagnosed as suffering from cancer, with only a 40 per cent chance of survival provided he underwent immediate chemotherapy, then a new form of treatment. After a year of treatment and recuperation, Bob Champion and Aldaniti, who had spent four months in a plaster-cast recovering from a third serious leg injury, came under starter's orders in the 1981 Grand National, which they went on to win.

Because of all the publicity surrounding them the pressure to win was incredible but Champion was supremely confident in his dream of winning The National had kept him going through his illness and his horse Aldaniti had cheated the vets bullet on three occasions. These two had stared death in the face and had lived to see another day.



Bob started the 'Bob Champion Cancer Trust' in 1983. They support and raise funds for the Bob Champion Cancer Research Laboratory, which forms part of the largest male dedicated research facility in Europe, situated at the Institute of Cancer Research in Sutton, Surrey. The Shetland Pony Grand National which will be at the Kent County Show this year will be raising money for the charity.

Bob Champion will be guest speaker for the Chairman's Luncheon on Saturday 8 July 2017.

Agriculture is back on the Map for the Show

The Show organisers are delighted that Cattle and Sheep entries are the highest they have been for five years with 422 sheep, 393 cow and 82 goat entries. There will also be a 115 calves, 130 lambs and 22 pens of pigs in the Kent Young Farmers Area. The Kent based youngsters also have a smaller marquee to house their 90 exhibits of poultry, Guinea Pigs and rabbits. The number of fleeces in the Wool Competition has also increased by 10%.

The Agricultural Area of the Show stretches from the Main Entrance up to the Clive Emson Conference Centre which will house the new look Food Hall this year. There is also a public restaurant in the area, called the Spitfire Restaurant, a good place to stop for refreshments.



The Livestock will be housed in large marquees and shedding and visitors will be able to see in excess of 50 different breeds of cattle, sheep and pigs during the three days. Competitions take place on each day with Judges looking for first, second and third place. Whilst every Judge may look for different aspects they are all based on each animal's individual breed traits and ultimately on the worth of the animal in terms of food production or breeding. Some competitions look for handling skills, whilst others look at turnout which means that both the animal and handler need to be immaculate.

The Goat Tent and Poultry Tent are wonderful areas to visit with animal owners on hand to talk to visitors about the different breeds, raising livestock in your own home and explaining the benefits of milking your own goat or collecting your own eggs.

Visitors can watch sheep shearing in the Agricultural area as part of the Hadlow College Stand, then pop along to the Story of Wool Tent. This is a great place to take part in some activities and learn about the huge range of products that are still made from wool today. The Sussex Cattle Society and Jacob Sheep Society will be in the area promoting these breeds and new this year is Knowles Dairy, a unique vintage dairy both educational and entertaining. This is a fully working dairy with all the sounds and smells you would expect from a milking parlour.

Young Farmers will be putting on a Show

Every year the Kent County Show hosts the Young Farmers section. They are in the Agricultural Area and showcase exactly why encouraging young people to understand where food comes from is so important. These young farmers will one day be providing the food we eat and looking after the countryside we enjoy.

Here are a few reasons why you should visit the YFC Area.

Over the three Show days, the Young Farmers will take part in over fifty competitions which highlight the dedication and high standards shown by all competitors

There are approximately 300 young farmers from Kent competing, aged from 10 years old to 26 years old

Young Farmers is run by the members for the members

They wake up at 4.00am each morning to prepare for showing. These will be the cleanest animals you will ever see.

They are one of the largest rural youth organisations in the UK dedicated to young people who have a love for agriculture and rural life.

Led by young people, for young people, Young Farmers' Clubs provide their 25,000 members aged 10 to 26 with a unique opportunity to develop skills, work with their local communities, travel abroad, take part in a varied competitions programme and enjoy a dynamic social life.

Food takes Centre Stage at the 2017 Show

Once again the wonderful Kent County Show 'Cookery Theatre' will be in full swing during the Show. The purpose built demonstration kitchen in the Food and Farming Area in the Maidstone Exhibition Hall, will host the Kent is Delicious Competition on Friday. Three schools will compete in the live final to prepare a 'Tasty Breakfast' using local, seasonal ingredients.

Saturday starts with Alexander Hunt from Potash Farm then Laura Bounds from the nationally selling, Kent Crisps and Kentish Oils brand. At midday visitors will be treated to a Baklava demonstration by 'Refined Baklava' followed at 1pm by Victoria Bryant from Little Brittany Crepes. In the afternoon Caroline Wilding from Dine Thyme will be sharing some of the secrets to her divine range of sausage rolls, pork pies and other pastries. The final chef of the day will be Jane Apps from the Fat Carrot exclusively producing vegetarian dishes.

On Sunday the cooking kicks off with Bruce McMichael from Tunbridge Wells Farmers Market followed again by Laura Bounds. At 12.00 noon and 1pm there will be two chefs from Kent Cookery School and Kent Collection followed by Will Devlin, Head Chef at the exciting new pop up restaurant. Hilary Steel, 'The Comedy Cook will entertain the audience with her culinary antics and Jason Williams will round off the Show with his excellent Kentish Pies.

The new Food Hall which has moved from marquees near Entrance 1 to the Clive Emson Conference Centre at the heart of the Showground will house 50 food and drink producers. Visitors will be able to taste and buy really unusual flavour products as well as specialist foods for the discerning visitor.



Bakemeister will have a range of gluten, dairy and egg free baked treats and Basiluruk will be showing visitors an organic range of Basilur tea which is high in antioxidants. Biddenden Vineyards will be selling their new range of sparkling Kentish Ciders, Bland's Cider specialise in fruit ciders and liqueurs. Award Winning Hush Heath Estates will be selling their fantastic Kentish wines. Not to be missed is Rubis Chocolate Wine, who will be bringing their award winning luxury chocolate wine which is made from spanish tempranillo red wine blended in the UK with chocolate.

For visitors searching for something a bit different can sample a number of alcoholic beverages; Copper Rivet Distillery produced a number of fine Gins, Vodka and Whiskey from their base in Kent, Thunder Toffee Vodka will be bringing their infamous, vodka and toffee blend and Top Drinks Kent will have an unusual selection of Hebridean spirits and liqueurs.

Visitors will also be able to try and buy a number of quirky products that you can only buy online or at Shows, Wiltshire Chilli Farm have a range of fiery preserves, the Isle of Wight Garlic Farm will be bringing their Garlic Beer and Punjaban will tempt with their curry sauces using natural ingredients.

Cheese lovers will have a field day with the taste and aromas of some outstanding cheeses; The French Comte Ltd will be bringing their comte cheese as will Blacks and Lymn Bank with their 20 different smoked and flavoured cheeses. There is also a dedicated Cheese and Wine Marquee that houses some of Kent's finest, hosted by Biddenden Vineyard.



Find out more

The online ticket system is now open to purchase discounted tickets for the 2017 Show. A family ticket will cost £45 in advance or £50 when bought at the gate. The family ticket entitles 2 adults and 2 children aged between 5 and 15 a full day entrance. Children under 5 go free and parking is free. Adult tickets are £20.70 in advance and £23 on the gate, a child ticket is £6.30 in advance and £7 on the gate.



The Kent County Show starts at 8am and stays open until 6pm although there is no rush to leave as some of the food stands stay open later. The Show has over 160 different activities, workshops, displays and competitions which run throughout the day and are often repeated daily.

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Pamela, 70, cracks the £25,000 mark with tireless efforts

The B&B owner set herself a target 12 years ago to raise cash for breast cancer care with various countywide collections

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

A 70-year-old bed and breakfast owner who has collected £25,000 for charity from all corners of Kent over the last decade says her relentless fundraising is keeping her young.

Pamela Penfold, from Rainham, has taken on a range of challenges throughout her life to raise money for good causes, but decided 12 years ago to dedicate herself to one in particular, and has been trekking across the county collecting cash for Breast Cancer Care every week ever since.

A subject close to her heart, after losing people on both her, and husband David's side of the family to the disease, the charity offers emotional and practical support to all people affected by breast cancer.

It also campaigns for improvement in standards of support and care, and helps promote the importance of early detection.

Mrs Penfold set herself a target of raising £20,000 for the charity, and smashed that ceiling several months ago, before receiving a certificate from the charity chief executive in April thanking her for raising more than £22,000.

Previously she has collected cash through photography, taken from the Himalayas, in a trek she says "almost killed" her, as well as local snaps, which have been produced in calendars the couple then go on to sell, with many of the proceeds going directly to Breast Cancer Care.

A former psychiatric nurse and bus driver, she now runs Abigail's Bed & Breakfast in the Medway town and told KoS of her journey to becoming one of the county's most committed fundraisers.

"I first got the feel for volunteering when I was 11 and collecting for the Red Cross and later raised money for homeless families," she said.

"I was 59 when I went up the Himalayas and that proved too much for me, but I said I would still like to do things, even as I was getting older, so got involved with Breast Cancer Care.

"I asked for a few collection boxes to go out on Friday and Saturday evenings and collect money around pubs.

"Things then progressed and now I've got 100 collection boxes all over Kent – from Canterbury, to Tenterden, to Faversham, to Gravesend, to the Medway towns – all over the place. I've currently raised £25,000."



SUCCESS: Pamela Penfold says she'll keep doing it "until I die".

Her volunteering - for which she has received three Pride of Medway awards over the years - has run side-by-side with her business commitments, as well as raising three children and four grandchildren.

Mrs Penfold also says she takes "40 tablets a day" following an operation to remove a tumour in her bowel, but insists that will not stop her continuing to raise cash for her favourite cause.

"Collections are getting harder because I've turned 70 and there's fewer pubs than there were a few years ago, but I'm still going because I love volunteering and want to keep doing it until I die," she said.

"I've become quite a familiar sight in all the pubs.

"What I've noticed is some charity collectors rush in and out of the same pub every single week and I think that's pushing their luck – that's why we go all over Kent so when we return it's been about three months since I was last in.

"I've done lots and lots but I wanted to do something that I could continue doing long-term into the future.

"I'm 70 and I'm not very well but it keeps me young."



Tears from a Queen as Countess is laid to rest

Senior royals gathered to bid a final farewell to Countess Mountbatten of Burma this week who died aged 93

By Tony Jones
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE life of Countess Mountbatten of Burma, who died at her Kent home earlier this month aged 93, was remembered at her funeral attended by the Queen, Duke of Edinburgh and her godson, the Prince of Wales.

Charles gave a private address at the funeral service of Lord Mountbatten's daughter, a woman he has described in the past as his "very special godmother".

Born Patricia Mountbatten, the Countess was the Duke of Edinburgh's first cousin and was the daughter of Charles' beloved great-uncle Earl Mountbatten.

The then Princess Elizabeth, her third cousin, was one of her bridesmaids at her wedding in 1946.

She died peacefully at her home in Mersham, near Ashford, on June 13, surrounded by her children who attended the service with their families.

The mourners arrived under heavy downpours with around 500 filling the pews of St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, where the vicar, the Reverend Alan Gyle, conducted the service.

Among the group were the Countess of Wessex, the Princess Royal and her husband Vice Admiral Tim Laurence and the Duke of York.

Members of the royal party also include the Duchess of Gloucester, Duke of Kent and Prince Michael of Kent.

Charles arrived at the church ahead of the Queen and Duke and when the royal couple approached the west door the prince kissed his mother's cheek and hand, then kissed his father on both cheeks before laying a hand affectionately on his back.

Philip's public appearance was only his second since a brief spell in hospital last week, for treatment for an unspecified infection.

The Countess had been the Colonel-in-Chief of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, known as "The Patricias", and soldiers from the unit acted as pall bearers.

Mourners said after the service that in his address Charles had spoken about his memories of the Mountbatten family.

In keeping with the Countess' connection with the military, the Last Post was played and traditional hymns were sung, My Eyes Have Seen The Glory Of The Coming Of The Lord and Lord Of All Hopefullness Lord Of All Joy.

After the service the Countess' wicker coffin, that appeared to be a handmade willow construction, was carried out by soldiers from the Canadian military unit.

The Countess's father Lord Mountbatten, her 14-year-old son Nicholas Knatchbull and her mother-in-law the Dowager Lady Brabourne were all murdered by the IRA in 1979 when their boat was blown up off the coast of Sligo.

The Countess, then known as Lady Brabourne, suffered serious injuries, but survived the blast, as did her husband Lord Brabourne and Nicholas's twin brother Timothy.

A local boat boy, 15-year-old Paul Maxwell, also died.

Lord Brabourne was the producer of films such as A Passage To India and Death On The Nile, and they had six surviving children who all attended the funeral.

The Countess once recalled how she cried every morning on waking for about six months after the IRA bomb attack.

In a book by a bereavement charity, she referred to "the seemingly endless black tunnel" through which those left behind have to pass to reach "the light that truly does appear at the end, and which we eventually found ourselves".

For more than 30 years she used her own personal experience of loss to help other bereaved parents, through her support of the charities Child Bereavement UK and Compassionate Friends.

Among the mourners seen leaving the church was adventurer Charlie Boorman and former Formula One world champion Damon Hill.

Charles later joined the family and many of the mourners for a post-funeral reception at a nearby hotel.



SORROW: The Queen, right, was a regular visitor to the Countess' home in Mersham, often spending low key weekends at the house. All photos: PA Wire





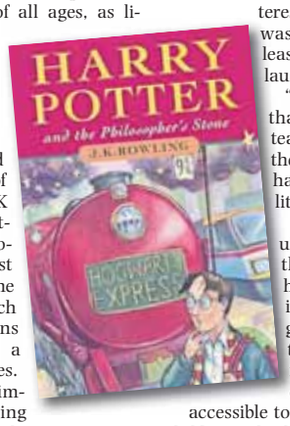
FAREWELL: Princess Anne and Prince Charles united in their grief

Pottermania lives on 20 years after his magical debut outing

JK Rowling's creation continues to have a huge influence on modern literature

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

TWENTY years on, and the magic of Harry Potter continues to cast a spell over readers of all ages, as libraries across the county report the books continue to "fly out like hotcakes" from their shelves.



Monday marked the anniversary of the publication of JK Rowling's Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone - the first in the series about the boy wizard which would spawn millions of book sales and a string of huge movies.

But its broader impact on encouraging children - particular boys - to engage with reading has been perhaps its most remarkable achievement.

Lindsay Prestage is from Kent County Council's libraries, registration and archives service.

She told us: "The Harry Potter books have had an enormous impact on children's reading, as witnessed by children's excitement and media interest when each new title was published and released at midnight launches.

"Research has shown that both children and teachers thought that the Harry Potter books had improved children's literacy.

"There was a particular impact for boys, as the Harry Potter books helped to make reading cool in the playground. As they were transformed into films, the books became appealing and accessible to a wider age range of children. The books have a reading age of about 11-12, but are read by children as young as six.



FANS: Young and old alike came in costume to Strood's library this week

"Research released by the National Literacy Trust at the beginning of June 2017 revealed 78 per cent of primary school children enjoy reading – the highest levels recorded. Library issues of children's fiction are remaining steady too.

"Events in libraries to celebrate the annual Harry Potter Night in February were well attended and this year's 20th anniversary events across the country have proved very popular and have booked up quickly, receiving good feedback from the children participating."



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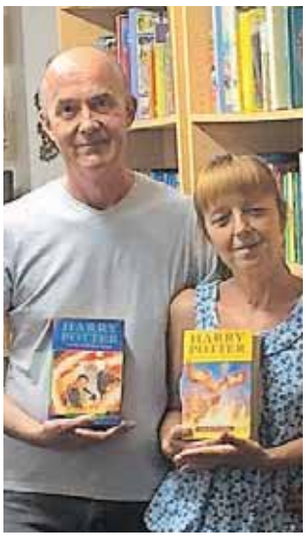
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Michael Dowling runs Oxford Street Bookshop in Whitstable.

He has seen first hand how the publishing phenomenon changed the entire marketplace.



CAPTION: Michael Dowling and Tizian Mazzoli with Potter books at their Whitstable book shop

He told Kent on Sunday: "For a book that nearly wasn't published, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone has made quite the impact on children's publishing.

"From the early 1990s the children's book market had been in steady decline which is probably why JK Rowling found it difficult to convince a publisher to accept her book.

"But once the Philosopher's Stone had been published the downward trend in children's fiction turned.

"The series' extreme popularity led The New York Times to create a separate best-seller list for children's books and convinced many publishers to rethink their approach to children's publishing.

"The children's fiction market has gone from strength to strength over the past 20 years with so many authors published across genres from adventure to fantasy and from mystery to horror.

"Many established adult fiction writers have also taken up writing for children and there is now such a wide selection to suit every taste.

"When my partner Tiziana Mazzoli and I took over the Oxford Street Bookshop in 2016, one of our goals was to greatly expand the children's section and we now have 26 shelves of children's literature including both the modern best sellers and a collection of vintage children's books from the Victorian era up to the 1970s."

He said Potter has opened the eyes of children and their parents to other writers for the younger reader.

Mr Dowling said: "Our bestselling authors have been Jeff Kinney's Diary of a Wimpy Kid series, Rachel Russel's Dork Diaries, Charlie Higson's Young Bond series as well as anything by Jacqueline Wilson, Michael Morpurgo, Derek Landy, Lucy Daniels and of course the Harry Potter series.

"We also sell a fair number of vintage books from the Brothers Grimm to Enid Blyton.

"Children often drag their parents into our shop and it is rare that they leave without not only a couple of children's books but a couple of adult fiction novels as well.

"Potter literally changed the marketplace for the better, in my opinion."

The boy wizard is certainly an enduring attraction. Strood library has been running a series of Potter-theme events this week, encouraging fans to turn up in costume as their favourite characters.

Emily Mycock, the library assistant at Strood, said: "Even though Harry Potter was perhaps more aimed at boys, it really does appeal to girls.

"We have an almost perfect split between boys and girls and lots are wearing their costumes.

"Even now, 20 years down the line, the Harry Potter books are still flying out like hot cakes.

"We have had to get a lot more in because they remain so popular. Of course, people can read the e-books, but it is not quite the same as having the actual book in your hands."

THE £11.5 BILLION BOY WIZARD



WHEN author JK Rowling (pictured) first conjured up the idea of the boy wizard, she struggled to get a publisher to show any interest in the project.

It took her two years and 12 publishing rejections before Bloomsbury handed over a £1,500 advance to see how it was received. They told her to keep a day job.

Little Alice Newton, the eight-year-old daughter of Bloomsbury's chairman was given the first chapter, and loved it so much she demanded the second.

Bloomsbury initially issued 1,000 copies of the first book, mostly for libraries.

Rowling was still not in the money and an £8,000 grant from the Scottish Arts Council helped her get by and do a second book.

By which point, the Harry Potter success story was growing as children started snapping up the book and wanting more.

The Chamber of Secrets followed in 1998 and they kept on coming, each book relaying one year of Potter's life at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

The Harry Potter empire is now said to be worth a staggering £11.5 billion. It has spawned films, toys, a West End play, studio tours and theme park rides.

At the latest estimate, it is thought the seven books in the series have so far shifted 400 million copies. Rowling became the first billionaire author.

Even after the books and films ended, the spin-offs continue.

There are reports of five movies, with several in the Fantastic Beasts series, plus the chance of more Potter related work, most notably a big screen version of the award-winning play, Harry Potter and the Cursed Child.

Oh, and remember that initial 1,000 run of the Philosopher's Stone? If you happen to have one, they are worth around £25,000 today.

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Discover the real Dunkirk as movie blockbuster set to hit the big screen

Boats from Kent played a key role during the war - now the ferries will take the strain ahead of hit film

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

LATER this month movie director Christopher Nolan releases his eagerly anticipated action film Dunkirk - a dramatic retelling of the horror and the heroics as Allied troops were forced back onto the beaches of the French town in 1940.



PAST: Some of the thousands who were rescued from Dunkirk beach

It would see one of the most remarkable rescue efforts in history as Operation Dynamo saw hundreds of small boats leave Ramsgate en route to the French coast. There they helped to rescue more than 330,000 troops who had been driven back by the Nazi machine.

That so many survived to fight another day speaks of the remarkable human spirit - and a tactical mistake by Adolf Hitler - that lives long in the memory.

Today, Dunkirk still bears the scars of its war involvement. And the ghosts of the 90,000 killed, wounded or taken prisoner during those frantic days.

From cemeteries on roadsides to the remains of defences and even shipwrecks revealed on the beaches at low tides, the town today will forever remain synonymous with that remarkable evacuation.

Yet, of course, for those in France, the withdrawal of the troops - among them French fighters - was at the time a terrifying prospect. Having failed to protect them from the Nazi hoardes, the locals felt deserted as the troops were carried back across the Channel.

Far less familiar to day-trippers, it is a compelling place to visit and just a short, direct, ferry service from Dover.

We took a trip over to highlight some of many places to absorb the history of a place set to be back in the public eye again and well worth the visit.

THE BEACHES

Stood on a warm day overlooking the stretch of golden sands and rolling dunes along the Dunkirk coast, it can be easy to forget the scenes of terror which so indellibly marked this area during the Second World War.

Today, Dunkirk's main coastline is vast and a children's paradise. By the town itself, a large promenade is lined with restaurants, cafes and bars - families enjoy the space, sun-worshippers the soft sands and waves.

A little further along the coast at Zuydcoote the waves reveal eerie relics of the past. As the tide recedes, so shipwrecks of several vessels are exposed in their sandy graves. Among them the Crested Eagle - a paddle steamer which once worked along the Kent coast but was destroyed by the Germans during the evacuation.

The dunes - so instantly recognisable - are perfect for exploring or sheltering from the sea breeze.

Tours of the Operation Dynamo sites are available - which also include locations used in the upcoming movie. Visit the local flying club, and you can even take a 20-minute flight in a light aircraft giving you a spectacular aerial view of the beaches.

ESQUELBECQ MEMORIAL

Hidden away close to the pretty village of Esquelbecq is a memorial to a scene of Nazi violence which has long been dubbed the 'forgotten massacre'.

The Royal Warwickshire Regiment had spent a full day positioned nearby seeking to hold back the German forces to allow as many Allied troops as possible to reach the beaches. Exhausted and out of ammunition, they eventually surrendered. Unfortunately for them, they found themselves face to face with the SS - the Nazis most feared and ruthless force. Ignoring the Geneva Convention, they led the 80 soldiers and one French soldier, down country lanes to a small unused barn in a farmer's field in La Plaine Au Bois. There they were pushed in and stick grenades thrown in. Those that survived were led out and shot. Only a handful managed to escape to reveal the horrors.

Today, a replica of the barn has been built and is lined with wreaths to remember those that fell there. In addition, the field has been turned into a memorial for those to pay tribute to those that fell.





FORT DES DUNES

It's easy to miss this 19th century







military building - but then that was always the point. Built in 1878 in Leffrinckoucke, a little under four miles east of Dunkirk, it was designed to protect Dunkirk and its port from any attack from the east.

Built into the undulating dunes, close to the sea, it is well disguised within the natural terrain.

Inevitably, it became entangled in Operation Dynamo as French forces positioned themselves there to withstand the German onslaught. But it took a pounding, killing, amongst others, General Janssen, commander of the 12th Motorised Infantry Division. His grave, along with those of many others who perished here, is still maintained a few hundred yards from the entrance. After the evacuation it was taken over by the Germans who infamously shot members of the French resistance here. They are all now remembered for their sacrifice. The venue was abandoned for many years, but has more recently been taken over and is open to visitors.

THE JEAN BART

Sometimes you just have to take your hat off to some people for their sheer drive and determination. Take Christian Cardin. He is president of Espace Tourville an on-going labour of love with the most remarkable ambitions.

After diving a wreck in the mid 1980s, he decided he want to fully recreate, using the original methods, a full-size 17th century ship, the Jean Bart, which was once the pride of the French navy.

Thus, on a site just a few miles down the coast from Dunkirk at Gravelines, there is the ever growing hull of this remarkable vessel. Alongside it are the workshops to create the huge nails and cut the required enormous timbers needed. Using everything to maximum value, the shavings of the wood are used in a neighbouring smokery for salmon and other fish. Which, in turn, is served up in the restaurant adjoining it which is built with off-cuts from the ship's construction. The idea being to create sufficient revenue generating bolt-ons to fund the ship's creation. It has cost many millions of pounds so far, but within 10 years should not only be complete but welcoming visitors on board.

FOOD & DRINK

It's all very well exploring the past and present, but ultimately a trip away can live or die by the quality of refreshments. The good news is that you are in the land of plenty in Dunkirk.

If you're taking in the air along the main promenade then there's the likes of Bistrot de la Plage, popular with the locals, or, a little further down, there's the friendly La Patateriе with a glorious open dining area and which take jacket potatoes to all new levels.

If you're closer to the port museum area, L'Edito offers something for everyone, or there's Le Puzzle which is a classy and popular venue.

And if it's just a drink, well France prides itself on its cafe culture so there's plenty of options.

GETTING THERE

Now this is the easy bit. DFDS offer direct services to Dunkirk from Dover. Journey time is two hours, but it does put you exactly where you want to be. There are 24 daily sailings and crossings for a car and passenger start at £39. A few minutes drive will get you into the town area leaving plenty of time for exploring. See www.dfdsseaways.co.uk for details.



IMPRESSIVE: The Jean Bart is under construction





NOW: Dunkirk's beaches today, and left, movie makers shoot scenes

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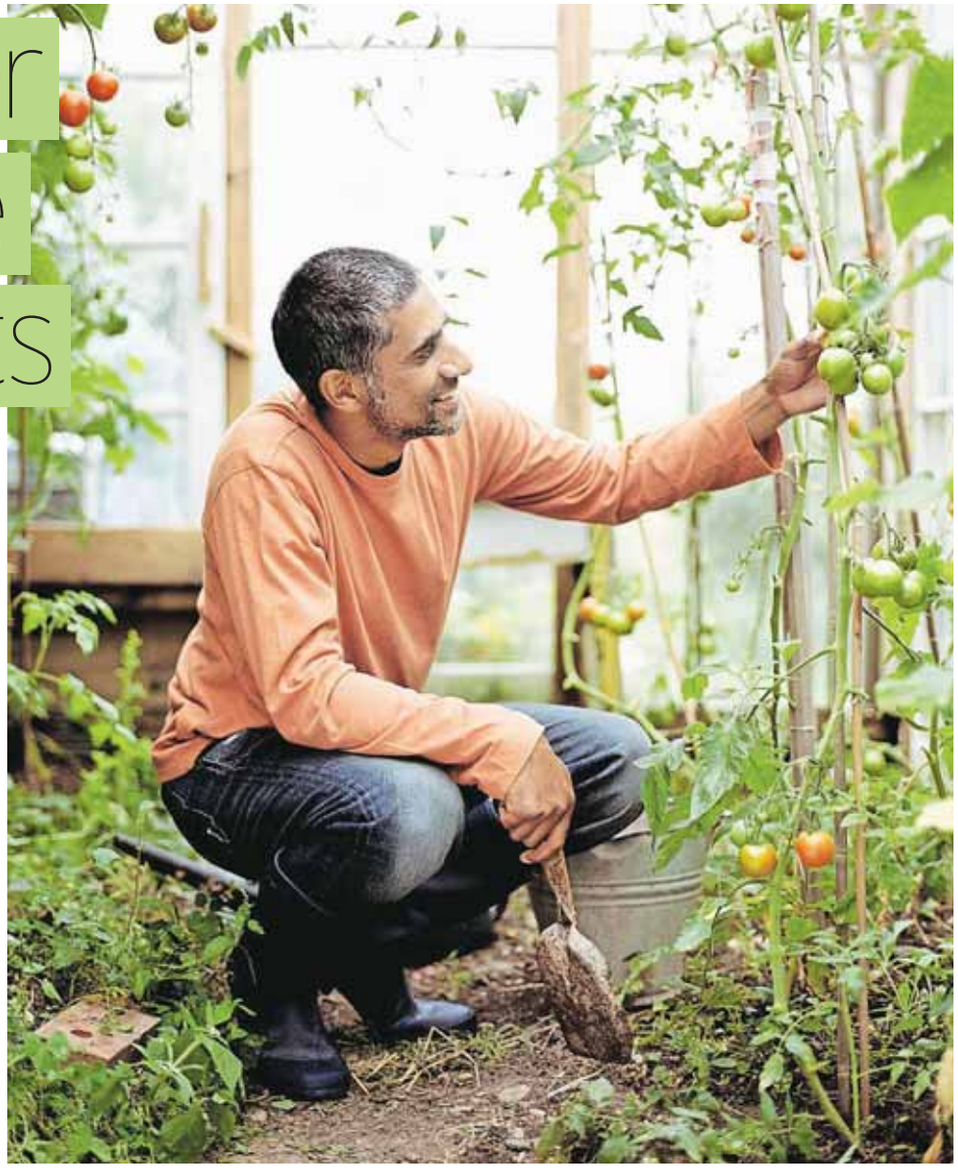
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A hot weather survival guide for your plants and gardens



The Royal Horticultural Society offers these practical tips to help your plot stay healthy in the summer heat

PLANTS wilting? Grass looking forlorn? Containers dried out? Don't despair. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is asking gardeners to take a few simple steps to ensure their plants don't suffer in the heat.

RHS chief horticulturist Guy Barter has pulled together a plant survival guide to help gardeners of every level.

Move pots and hanging baskets into shade

Although houseplants and conservatory plants - bougainvillea and coleus, for example - like to spend summer on the patio, in this weather they might have to go back inside.

Place plants in pots beneath hanging baskets; when you water the hanging basket, both are wetted. RHS research has shown a mere mugful of water will sustain hanging baskets well enough, especially if they are shaded.

Don't worry about perennials in borders

Plants grown in the soil often wilt at midday but then recover overnight. Many herbaceous perennials do this. They usually carry on well enough until the rain or cooler weather return.

Give watering priority to leafy salads

Peas and broad beans in flower and leafy salads nearing maturity are the

■ Turn to page 26



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■ From page 25

priority for watering in the vegetable garden. The set of pods and succulence of leaves are hugely enhanced by a drink.

There is still ample soil moisture, but from next month, it will begin to run low. Once runner beans start flowering, they become a priority for watering.

Sow seeds at cooler times of day

Water the seedbed in the evening and sow the following day. Always sow lettuce in late afternoon so they don't get hot. Other seeds being sown now - hollyhocks, sweet williams, wallflowers and vegetables such as Chinese greens and Florence fennel - will emerge quickly.

But they will be vulnerable to pests unless covered by horticultural fleece or insect-proof mesh.

Puddle in new plants

Place plants in a hole and fill it with water repeatedly until the hole is full of wet soil and then bed the plants in well before mulching.

Although planting from October to March is advised, if you 'puddle in' your summer purchases, they will get off to a good start. Conversely, plants showing signs of post-planting stress - wilting, going grey and losing leaves - will benefit from being temporarily covered by a sheet of newspaper, held down with some stones, along with watering, until conditions become less fierce.





POTS BEING PROTECTED IN THE SHADE. BELOW, HELLEBORUS ORIENTALIS. PICTURES: PA

Give greenhouses plenty of ventilation

Open greenhouses and conservatory doors and windows wide, removing panes if necessary, and consider increasing shade. A min-max thermometer is essential; anything over 30C is damaging to plants, although cacti and succulents can withstand intense heat.

Keep on top of pests and diseases

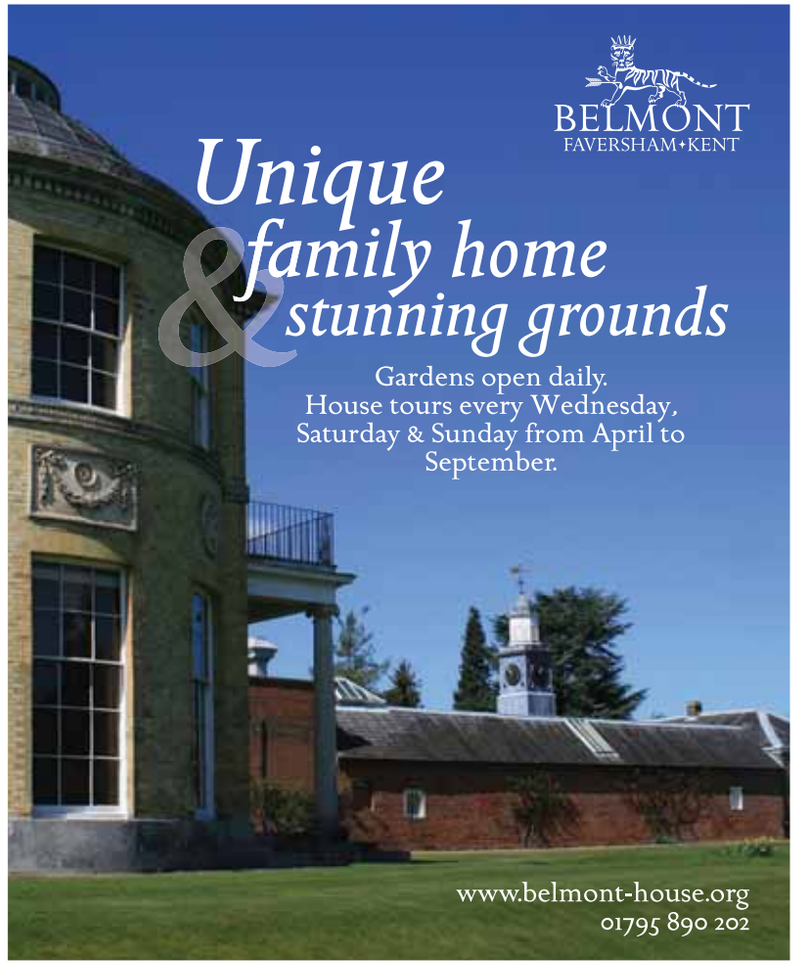
Even a light touch with the hoe in hot weather causes weeds serious harm. Keep attacking annual weeds, such as chickweed, groundsel and fat hen, and perennial ones, including couch grass and bindweed.

Hot dry weather inhibits slugs, but watch out for aphids, including greenfly and blackfly, which can be rampant in early summer. Their natural enemies, including hoverflies, lacewings and ladybirds, should help keep numbers down.

Most plant diseases are also inhibited by heat and dryness, but expect powdery mildew on delphiniums, courgettes, roses and sweet peas, and be ready to water affected plants well, as drought-stressed plants are especially susceptible.







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Into the blue: Three decor looks to float your boat this year

Set sail into summer with fresh schemes inspired by stark skies and seaside settings. Gabrielle Fagan sources the season's key looks...

YOU can't beat the blues - instead you should embrace them this year, as they're taking the interiors world by storm.

Be inspired by three settings - coastal, Moroccan, and ocean style - featuring bright blue sky shades through to dramatic deep indigo and moody sea greens.

Simply choose a theme, and create the look with our top finds...

Classic Coastal

"This year, there's a big focus on blues of all shades, and there's no easier way to use them than by creating coastal style. Its enduring popularity is unsurprising, because it's timeless, informal and so easy to live with," says Alex Whitecroft, head of design at I Want Wallpaper.

"It's all about recreating that peaceful, contented feeling that comes from a trip to the coast, within the home," adds Alex.

"Texture can play a key part and realistic faux-effect driftwood, wood beam or pebble-effect wallpapers are perfect for a beach hut backdrop. Stripes are a traditional choice for conjuring a crisp, fresh seaside vibe."

"Choose from a palette of cool blues and sandy neutrals to evoke hazy summer days by the sea, and build on the look with natural materials and furniture - distressed or weathered pieces will give a 'lived in' feel," suggests Alex.

"Another fun way of introducing this style is by using wallpaper and accessories with nautical motifs, such as shells, anchors, lighthouses or vintage maps."

Moroccan Magic

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"Moroccan style can be incredibly versatile," says Sarah Quilliam, head of product design at curtain and blinds specialists, Hillarys.

"The current trend for all things geometric inspired by ikat and batik designs, combined with the classic pairing of intensely-hued blue and white, is Moroccan style made easy.

"It draws on a melting pot of influences," Susan adds. "From a bohemian eclectic vibe that mixes rich Moorish colours with layers of vibrant pattern, through to calm minimalism, which blends a palette of cool white with accents of polished silver and bleached wood.

"It's not about going overboard. Instead, keep the backdrop simple with whitewashed walls and floorboards for an authentic, summery feel," advises Sarah.

"Bring in patterned textiles in bold indigo blue and white, such as curtains or rugs, to give a space an instant lift, and accessorise with lanterns, tray tables, and floor cushions for an Eastern feel."

Catch the Wave

"For a gentle, tranquil interpretation of shore style, replicate the colours of the ocean with its harmonious ever-changing blend of blue, green and teal shades," suggests Rebecca Snowden, interior style advisor, Furniture Choice.

"This palette will work well with natural materials - grained woods and stone - and can be dressed up or down to suit the mood," adds Rebecca. "This look is a world away from the cheery beach-hut style, and more akin to a sanctuary on a far-flung shore.

"Layer pale, misty shades of blue, green and grey to give a tonal effect, and avoid anything too arresting, which will jolt the eye," Rebecca says. "Soft, floaty fabrics - so characteristic of sun-bleached and sun-drenched settings - would also work well.

"Dress a bed with linen and cotton throws and accessorise with glass and ceramics in blues and greens, and beachcomber items such as shells and driftwood."

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CROWDS: Organisers say to expect some delays accessing the site due to heightened security checks on everyone entering the show

County show hikes security as 80,000 visitors to flock

The county's showcase event takes place on July 7-9 and is set to be the best yet

VISITORS to this year's Kent County Show are being warned to expect delays at peak times and bring fewer items as security is ramped up in the light of recent terror atrocities.

Extensive bag searches will be carried out on everyone entering the site and there will be a greater security presence both inside the Detling site and surrounding it.

The Kent County Show is one of the highlights of the summer calendar, and this year takes place between July 7-9. Last year just over 80,000 visitors attended the three-day event.

Organisers, the Kent County Agricultural Society, says it has held extensive talks with Kent Police, the local council and its own head of security and health and safety advisor to ensure "after recent attacks in the UK and overseas, the annual event has identified any potential risks and have the relevant responses in place to ensure a safe and secure day out for visitors".

The event safety plan has been reviewed and endorsed by emergency services - it includes a number of emergency procedures, evacuation plans, liaisons with emergency services, on site security and a response to a major incident.

Bags will be searched as they enter the showground and organisers say it "may cause additional waiting times at entry points".

Lucy Hegarty, show manager, explained, "We are asking our visitors to limit the items they bring to the show so the bag searches cause the least possible impact and delays and we would like to thank the public for their support.

"We are aware that this may mean a longer wait at peak times. Visitors should try to arrive earlier to avoid these peaks."

The show opens at 8am on all three days. Traditional peak times are between 10am and noon on Saturday and Sunday.

Kevin Attwood, chairman of the show, said: "We would like to inform all our visitors that there is no specific perceived threat to the Kent County Show.

"As a responsible organisation, we believe that enhancing our event safety plan and seeking advice from experts is the correct route to take".

National Police Chiefs' Council lead for protective security, deputy assistant commissioner Lucy D'Orsi said: "Keeping the public safe to enjoy a summer of special events is our top priority. Sadly we have seen that these can be targeted by those who want to cause harm. But the public should be reassured that police, partners and commercial organisations are working hard together to keep them safe and secure.

"We have had a tremendous response from companies who want to do all they can to raise awareness with their staff."

This year there will be over 400 exhibitors and trade stands and over 300 competitions, activities and displays for crowds to enjoy in the showcase event for farming, the countryside and rural life, while celebrating what the county has to offer.

Tickets for the event are on sale now.

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Women Seeking

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JASMINE, Petite Black lady 51yrs, varied interests. Seeking white man for relationship. Looks unimportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427657**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673**

MATURE lady, slim and youthful, divorcee, loves laughter, life and everything. WLTM gent for continued fun and passion. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427655**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715**

CATHY, 54yr old widow, I'm kind and warm hearted and hoping you will call me. Looks unimportant must have GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427653**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399**

JANE, attractive 50 something lady. I love to cook and care for my man. Is that you? ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427651**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375**

SONIA, mature lady, pretty and feminine with fair hair. Loves to socialise, walking, car boot sales and more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427647**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 422365**

JANE 55yrs romantic homely lady, hoping to meet a man for outings, to cook and care for. You won't be sorry if you call. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427645**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3034 Box 425979**

HELLO I'm 47yrs old, I'm a curvy brunette, varied interests with GSOH, hard working and solvent. WLTM gent taller than me, 5ft3. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427639**

HARRIET 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box 426205**

NATALIA, black beauty! I am late 50s but still fit with a good figure and lovely skin and eyes. I would like to meet a nice white gentleman, older than myself for chats, maybe more. **Text Only. Mailbox 4107799**



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ATTRACTIVE Irish lady, 34yrs seek gent of any age. I'm caring, attractive with lots of offer, call to hear more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427637**

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. **Tel: 0906 515 3042 Box 426851**

PAMELA early 70s with softly rounded body! If you are a tender male with passion then call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427635**

CAROLINE, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady, looking for no strings midweek liaisons. **Tel: 0906 515 3026 Box 427533**



HELLO I am a black lady, 60yrs young with a great personality and lovely looks. Call if you are looking to meet someone like me, or text me. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427585**

PIA, Asian lady, 57yrs, very caring and a little subservient and quiet. I am a good cook and loyal friend. Pls text me if you are kind man 55+ **Text Only. Mailbox 4013378**

DEBBIE, young looking 49yrs, pretty brunette lady with lots to offer. If you are interested in a meeting a lady like me then please call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427611**

MICHELLE, 28yrs blue eyed blonde with busty figure. I'm very mature for my age and hope to meet a man to care for. I'm willing to please. Call or text me and I will get straight back to you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427649**

JULIE, 68yrs but very fit and young looking. Married to an older gent so hoping to meet someone much much younger. Text Me. **Text Only: 4193435**

BECKY, 30 something lady. Full of laughter, very open minded and discreet. Hoping to meet similar minded gent who is older than me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427495**

KAREN, late 50's seeking discreet gent any age/area for daytime meetings. **Text Only. Box: 4194757**

SIMONE, attractive lady seeking genuine man, I'm in my 60s but young looking. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427337**

MARGARET is in her 60s, she's young looking, blue-eyed blonde, kind, loving with lots of qualities. Seeking mature gent for mutual life's pleasures. Please call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427493**

FELICITY, "my friends call me posh" I'm not really. Call me to see. I'm 58yrs, curvy, blonde extensions and very good for my age. ACA. **Text Only. Box: 4043583**

CHRISTINE, young looking 43yrs, kind with lovely blue eyes. Genuine, loving. WLTM gent with GSOH, must be older than me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427491**

JANET, late 40's divorcee, own home and car looking to spice up my life with some fun. Discreet men only please, I'm not ready for a full on relationship, casual chats. **Text Only. Box: 4189331**

TRUDY, 70 something lady seeks gent. I'm broadminded and will respond to all calls. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427471**

Men Seeking

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THANET male, retired, 5ft5, dark hair, smart, OHOC, likes walks, travel in motorhome, looking for a single, attractive lady with similar interests in Thanet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427557**

SOLVENT male, older but young at heart, looking for a young lady to wine and dine and spoil and pamper and in turn to pamper me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427443**

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, slim build, 5ft9, brown eyes, hard working, enjoys fishing and socialising, looking for no stings attached fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427173**

HI ladies, looking for either NSA fun or LTR. I am single/work/live in own house. **Text only. Mailbox: 4509325**

LOCAL 70 year old young male, now single, nice appearance and dresser, looking for fun and friendship with a lady, 55-70, possible holidays. Can travel. Please ring. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426897**

LIVELY mature gent, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

WELL off man, wanting a young lady for spoiling. I am a sugar daddy looking for a sugar baby. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427441**

HELLO, I'm 58yrs and called Marie. I'm tall and seeking a man who likes to look at me. I am Black and very sensual. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427475**

JANE, mature blonde lady, loves jokes, countryside, driving, cosy nights in. I'm solvent and seek a gent 70+. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427473**

SUSAN, 72yrs, divorcee, tall, slim and attractive. Seeking gent for lunches, friendship, leading to more. I'm solvent with my own home. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427343**

TALL slim lady 61yrs and of Irish origins. GSOH, likes travel, open minded and kind. Hoping to meet similar minded gent of any age. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427307**

JULIE, 54yrs, loves life, honest, caring open minded and can be discreet when needed. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427309**

CARING, sociable male, 72, N/S, likes all types of music, walking, meals out, looking for a lady for friendship at first. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426865**

KENT man, retired engineer, solvent, enjoys holidays, meals out, good conversation, WLTM a slim lady, 60-70, with a GSOH, to share these times and hopefully become friends. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426887**

RETIRED, smart, 68 year old, 5ft5, I enjoy eating out, walking, holidays and golf, WLTM a slim, attractive lady, 60-68, for a loving, tender relationship, to enjoy these times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421853**

MALE divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717**

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641**

BARRY, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

JERRY, 66, brown hair, brown eyes, recently widowed, love to walk my dog, WLTM compatible lady for companionship and to see where things go. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426387**

LOCAL man, seeks lady for friendship possibly more, for romantic dates and good times together, hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426195**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

MALE, 55, looking for no strings attached friendship, with a lady 60-70, any status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426133**

MALE, 6ft, brown hair and blue eyes, warm and understanding, likes dining out and cosy nights in, lots of fun, friendship and holidays. Looking for a lady over 48. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426057**

EASYGOING male, 49, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 401401**

CARING sociable, GSOH, slim, attractive, married gent, 67, feels discarded and lonely, seeks likewise lady 60+ for trips out, dining etc. **Text only. Mailbox: 5082918**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**



PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425343**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335**

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015**

MALE, 70s, would like to meet slim lady 60 plus. **Text only. Mailbox: 4505135**

GENUINE gentleman, family minded, kind, generous seeks lady 55-75 for wining, dining and wine and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425329**



PROFESSIONAL gentleman, 64, widowed, own house, loves holidays abroad, reading, eating out, eating in and shows, WLTM a lady of similar age to share interests and happy times together hopefully leading to lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425787**

HELLO, mature gentleman looking for a lady who is caring, likes holidays, karaoke, meals out, country walks and cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425401**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425345**

RETIRED, intelligent, Broadstairs widower, GSOH, medium height and build, seeks slim lady for friendship and companionship initially. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424697**

MALE 50 seeks mature, home loving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683**

SLIM, 5ft 6 white male WLTM 18 to 42 year old lady for friendship. **Text only Mailbox: 5441709**

MARTIN trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424681**

MARK 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424679**

Gay Seeking

Join our Gay online service ***FREE*** visit: **localgaydate.co.uk**

GAY guy, medium build, likes outdoors, DIY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267**

EASY going guy, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413**

ROB, bi-curious male, 55, seeks likeminded male, crossdresser/TV. Must be discreet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426287**

MALE, 40s, seeking gym buddy to attend DW gym in the early evenings, similar age. Margate. **Text only. Mailbox: 5779191**

Friends

FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4748240**

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Big names confirmed for fresh term of uni's In Conversation

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk



VENUE: Most of the events take place in Canterbury - but Polly Toynbee will appear at Deal's Astor Theatre

POLITICIAN Michael Gove, columnist Polly Toynbee, humanitarian Terry Waite and best-selling author Francesca Simon are just four of the big names confirmed for the University of Kent's popular In Conversation series which returns later this year.

Launched in 2015, each event in the series consists of an informal conversation between the university's chancellor, BBC journalist and author Gavin Esler, and a leading public figure.

The events have so far proved popular and attracted some big names - among them the likes of actress Dame Diana Rigg, crime writer Ian Rankin, film critic Mark Kermode, and comic Jo Brand. Recordings of all the events are uploaded onto the university's YouTube channel for viewing.

The latest series, which begins on September 1, will take place at the Gulbenkian and the Colyer-Fergusson buildings on the university's Canterbury campus, but begins with a one-off special at the Astor Theatre in Deal.

There, the audience will see journalist and writer Polly Toynbee discuss her career and a host of key topical issues.

Tickets for that event will cost £10 or £5 for students.

The Canterbury events start on October 3 with Terry Waite - famously the Archbishop of Canterbury's envoy to Lebanon where he helped negotiate the release of a number of hostages before he himself was captured and detained between 1987 and 1991.

On October 23, author, commentator and political activist Owen Jones will take the hotseat. Known for his left wing views, he has written for the Guardian, Independent and New Statesman.

Environment secretary Michael Gove is likely to make lively debate on November 3. He fought hard for Brexit - then was seen to take down Boris Johnson's hopes of becoming leader.

And finally on October 28, children's author Francesa Simon will appear - best known for the hugely popular Horrid Henry books.

Tickets for those events cost £5 or £4 for students with all funds going towards the Kent Opportunity Fund.

Audience members can participate in the conversations by submitting questions in advance via Twitter using #GavinAsks or email events@kent.ac.uk.

Millican set for next year



COMEDIAN Sarah Millican has confirmed she will be performing at Margate's Winter Gardens next June.

The show, for June 24, 2018, went on sale on Friday with tickets costing £27.50.

Live opera on big screen

PUCCINI's La Boheme: Live from Taormina in Sicily will be beamed live into cinemas on July 5.

Among the Kent venues showing the opera as it happens are Ashford Cineworld, Vue in Thanet, Canterbury's Gulbenkian, Tunbridge Wells' Trinity Theatre and the Odeon at Orpington.

The show that runs well



WEST End hit The Play That Goes Wrong heads in Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre from July 31 to August 5.

Featuring finely-tuned farce and slapstick, tickets, at £20.25 to £36.25 are on sale now.

Thousands flock to fair

THOUSANDS are set to flock to the Danson Park Country Fair in Bexleyheath this weekend for a host of family entertainment, displays and rural skills demonstrations.

Running from 10am until 5pm on Saturday and Sunday, it also includes a circus skills workshop and lots of animals.



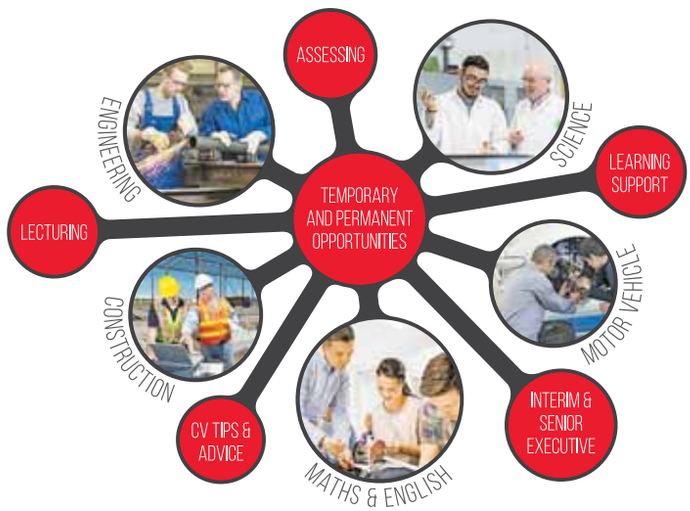
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Jethro's double-header



COMIC Jethro returns to the county in September with his Bull and Bonkers Tour at Dartford's Orchard Theatre on September 19, before heading back to Margate's Winter Gardens on January 17.

Free guided bike rides

TWO free guided cycle rides will take place on July 8 in Canterbury - part of a series aimed at people over 55 but open to all.

The less than 10-mile routes are offered by the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership. Bikes are available to borrow.

To book your place call 03000 410900.

Baby drill monkey at park



PORT Lympne has welcomed another animal to its ranks, following the birth of drill monkey Nyombe - the ninth successful birth on the breed at the park - and now on show to visitors.

Play areas' £22k boost

PLAY areas in two Tunbridge Wells parks are to be refubished.

Some £22,000 will be spent upgrading facilities at The Grove in the town centre and the Julian Hewitt play area on Cavendish Drive.

Work is set to get under way this summer and financed by funds from nearby developments.

What a feeling as stars booked in for Flashdance's stage return

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk



INSPIRED: Movie is based on the massive movie hit of 1983. Inset, A1 star Ben Adams.

ANYONE who holds the eighties in high regard will need no introduction to Flashdance - the hit movie which spawned a monster hit for Irene Cara.

And now its back on the stage as Flashdance - The Musical featuring Strictly Come Dancing favourite Joanne Clifton and singer-songwriter Ben Adams in the main roles.

It tells the story of 18-year-old Alex, a welder by day and 'flashdancer' by night, who dreams of going to the prestigious Shipley Dance Academy and becoming a professional dancer. When a romance complicates her ambitions, she harnesses it to drive her dream of aiming for the big time.

It rolls into Dartford's Orchard Theatre for a series of shows between October 9-14 and then on to the Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells between November 13-18 as part of its first UK tour since 2011.

Says Joanne Clifton: "This is just another dream come true. I think everyone in the world whether dancer or non-dancer, as soon as they hear What a Feeling, remember that iconic scene at the end of the film and I'm so incredibly lucky that I get to do that every night in a UK tour. I just hope the water's not too cold when it falls on me!".

Ben Adams, who will join her on stage as Nick Hurley, is best known as lead singer of the band A1 and has gone on to work with the likes of Robin Thicke, Craig David, JLS, Boyzone and Alexandra Burke to name but a few.

He explains: "It's amazing to be part of such an iconic story, and as an 80's child I was brought up on this music so I couldn't be happier. Musical Theatre has always been a real passion of mine, so to be asked to play this role, and to be working with such an amazing cast and crew is a real honour."

Flashdance the movie proved a hit with audiences, while the platinum-selling hit title track Flashdance – What A Feeling won both an Academy Award and a Golden Globe in 1983, with the soundtrack winning a Grammy in 1984.

Tickets for the tour and Kent dates are on sale now.







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Moving journey of son who saw mum murdered

The son of murder victim Rachel Nickell looks back on a tragedy that tranformed his life 25 years ago

MANY of us will remember the picture of Rachel Nickell - the beautiful blonde young mother, looking carefree and happy - that was published frequently during the investigation into her horrific murder.

The crime was witnessed by her son, Alex Hanscombe, who was just three weeks shy of his third birthday on that nightmare day, July 15, 1992. They'd gone for a walk on Wimbledon Common with their dog, Molly, and were on a woodland path when the attacker appeared out of nowhere, grabbing and throwing Alex to the ground before setting upon his mother, sexually assaulting her and stabbing her 49 times in a frenzied attack, and then running off.

"As I lifted myself up after the attack I felt dizzy and unsteady, and I saw the assailant washing the blood off his hands in the stream and disappearing," Alex recalls, whose clothes had been splattered with blood.

"Even though there was great intensity of the moment leading up to my mother lying on the ground and there was blood everywhere, there was also a great sense of peace and tranquillity, so for me she looked incredibly beautiful, as if she was going to get up at any moment from one of our imaginary games.

"What sticks in my mind is that moment of asking my mother to get up and realising in that moment that she was gone and wasn't coming back. Even though I was very young, that moment of realising how quickly your life can change and that feeling of heartbreak is something that has always stayed with me."



PAST: Rachel Nickell and son Alex before tragedy struck

Twenty-five years on, Alex, now 27, has written Letting Go, which charts the terrible crime and its aftermath and effect on him, tearing apart the happy family unit they'd been before his mother was so cruelly taken.

Speaking from his home in Barcelona, where he lives with his father, Alex suffered for years.

"The grieving process and the stress of the attack manifested itself in nightmares," he recalls. "During the day I'd play perfectly happily as if nothing had happened, and for several years I was tormented in my sleep every night. I'd be dragging things around the room, screaming like a tortured animal and my movements became spasmodic."

DNA evidence recovered a decade later led them to killer, Robert Napper, in 2004.

Napper was already in Broadmoor, the high-security psychiatric hospital, after committing more than 100 sexual offences and murdering another mother.

Says Alex: "I had to reach a sense of closure. I had to come to terms with forgiving that person long before the case came to a closure. Her energy is something I carry with me always."

Letting Go by Alex Hanscombe is published by Harper Element, priced £7.99. Available now

Thomas bets on future

COMEDIAN and satirist Mark Thomas stages his one-man show at Folkestone's The Quarterhouse in October.

Mark Thomas: A Show That Gambles on the Future sees him predict events to come - as well as those of his audience - before gambling on their outcome.

The show takes place on Friday, October 13. Tickets, priced £16, are on sale now via the venue's website.

To be or not to be etc

SHAKESPEARE classic Hamlet will be performed at Nurstead Court in Meopham for two special outdoor shows staged by Changeling Theatre.

The two performances, both commencing at 7.15pm, take place on July 6 and August 9.

Tickets are on sale now, and picnics and chairs are encouraged for those attending.

For tickets see the Woodville Theatre in Gravesend's website.

Margate's got soul

ARRESTED Development, Trevor Nelson and Candi Staton all perform at the Margate Soul Festival across the weekend of August 4-6.

The star-studded line-up takes place at venues across the town with tickets selling fast.

Standard tickets for access to the full weekend line-up cost £66 with day tickets ranging from £27.50 to £44.

Sugarhill Gang sell-out

TICKETS for legendary hip hop group the Sugarhill Gang at Tunbridge Wells' The Forum next month have sold out.

The band, best known for having the first recognised rap hit in 1979 with Rappers' Delight, which reached number three in the UK charts, are playing the venue on August 3 as part of a UK tour.

It follows a string of festival appearances last year.

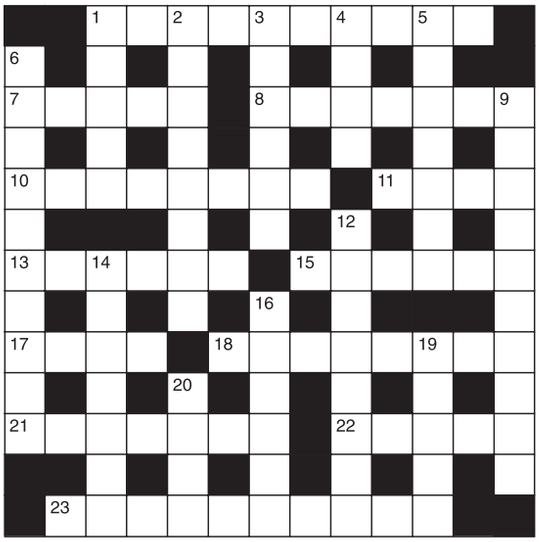
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PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across

1. Decisive (10)
7. Crawl (5)
8. Double (7)
10. Lifted (8)
11. Unhearing (4)
13. Disorderly (6)
15. Rural (6)
17. Too (4)
18. Apt (8)
21. Captivate (7)
22. Alarm (5)
23. Heedless (10)

Down

1. Hearten (5)
2. Wedding (8)
3. Epistle (6)
4. Evince (4)
5. Forceful (7)
6. Amass (10)
9. Lack (10)
12. Numerous (8)
14. Favour (7)
16. Threw (6)
19. Reward (5)
20. Region (4)

Cryptic

Across

1. Traveller's account showing variety of food available (4,2,4)
7. Grow any tree inside (5)
8. See 2 Down.
10. Pneumatic power for branch of national defence (3,5)
11. Take a crafty look both ways (4)
13. Seems a different source of gingili oil (6)
15. In social class the first of the Hindus is unsullied (6)
17. See 3 Down.
18. It's a dim thing to change just before the small hours (8)
21. Granted it's what the fertile seed did (7)
22. Transport the first of the maize straw (5)
23. He makes comprehensive plans, but the artist gets confused (10)

Down

1. To acknowledge applause with some hesitation in shady enclosure (5)

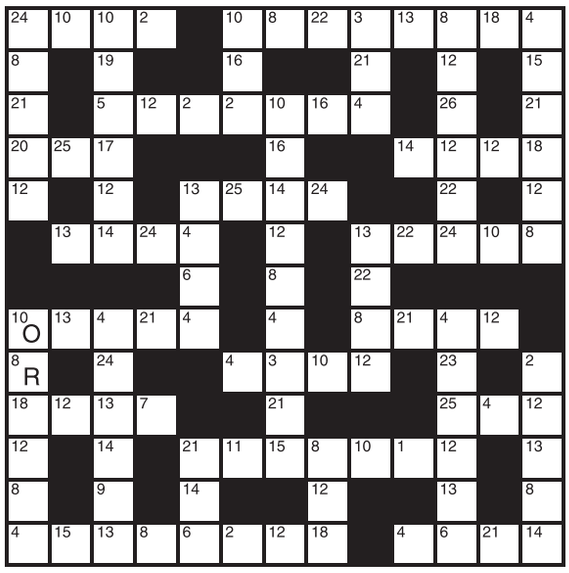
2 and 8 Ac. Cambrian version of the Mother Country? (4,2,2,7)

3 and 17 Ac. Presumably skating instructors don't participate in these clerical duties! (6,4)

4. Convivial occasion held in cafe tea room (4)
5. It's illegal to use them for smoking jackets! (7)
6. Abruptly escapes and has a shattering effect on holiday (6,4)
9. When one takes at least one course before retiring (10)
12. Kidnap a sailor in China (8)
14. Glut of various fruits round the East (7)
16. Winger that is singularly below par! (6)
19. Having a pinched appearance in imitating auntie (5)
20. One endlessly cherished conception (4)

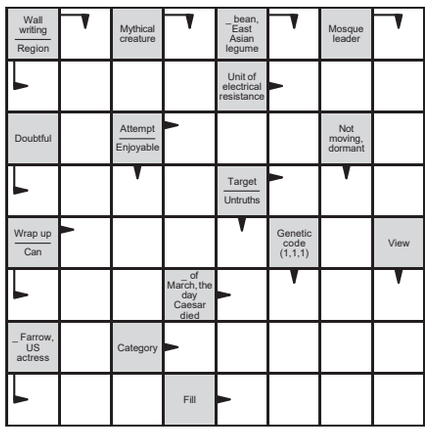
CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.





Arrowword



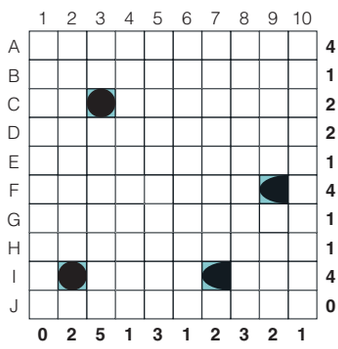
Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

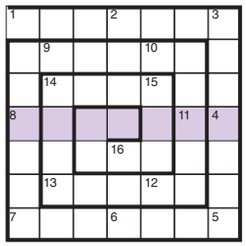
THE FLEET

1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine





Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Male deer
2. Present
3. Pith helmet
4. Tiny amount
5. Hairstyle
6. Expel
7. Extend journey
8. Status
9. Brown seaweed
10. Chessman
11. Inert gas
12. Unfeeling
13. Stain
14. Petty argument
15. Company
16. Untidy state

Keyword clue: A famous composer

SUDOKU

Hard

2					6			
1				5		9		
	8				9	4	5	
	1			8		3		6
7		6		3			8	
	9	4	2				1	
		2		9				4
			3					5

Easy

7			2		8		9	
3		1				5		7
		9		3	7	4		
5		3		8				4
	2		5		1		3	
9				6				
		5	8	1		9		
8	3	4				7	1	5
1				4	5			3

Solutions

Double Crossword

Across: 1 Bill of fare; 7 Rowan; 8 Fathers; 10 Air Force; 11 Peep; 13 Sesame; 15 Chaste; 17 Work; 18 Midnight; 21 Yielded; 22 Haulm; 23 Strategist. Down: 1 Bower; 2 Land of my; 3 Office; 4 Fete; 5 Reefers; 6 Breaks away; 9 Suppertime; 12 Snaunhai; 14 Surfeit; 16 Birdie; 19 Gaunt; 20 Idea.

Quick

Across: 1 Conclusive; 7 Creep; 8 Twofold; 10 Uprised; 11 Deaf; 13 Unruly; 15 Rustic; 17 Also; 18 Suitable; 21 Enthral; 22 Panic; 23 Regardless. Down: 1 Cheer; 2 Nuptials; 3 Letter; 4 Show; 5 Violent; 6 Accumulate; 9 Deficiency; 12 Multiple; 14 Rosette; 16 Hurled; 19 Bonus; 20 Area.

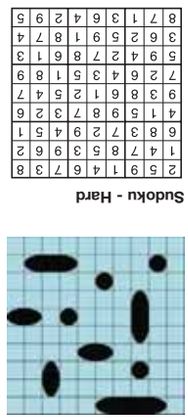
Codeword

1=V, 2=L, 3=H, 4=S, 5=Y, 6=K, 7=F, 8=R, 9=Z, 10=O, 11=M, 12=E, 13=A, 14=N, 15=P, 16=W, 17=G, 18=D, 19=X, 20=B, 21=I, 22=C, 23=Q, 24=T, 25=U, 26=J

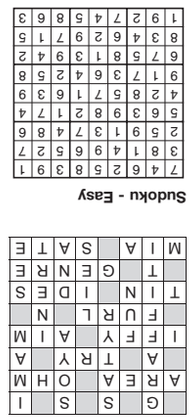
Word Spiral

1 Stag; 2 Gift; 3 Topi; 4 Iota; 5 Afro; 6 Oust; 7 Tour; 8 Rank; 9 Kelp; 10 Pawn; 11 Neon; 12 Numb; 13 Blot; 14 Tiff; 15 Firm; 16 Mess.

Keyword: Rossini



Battleships



Arrowword

Sudoku - Hard

Sudoku - Easy

Cycle your way to a new adventure



Seeing as it's the 200th anniversary of the bicycle, it would almost be rude not to explore on two wheels this summer, suggests **Georgia Humphreys**

When Baron Karl Freiherr von Drais created the bicycle 200 years ago, the German inventor probably had little idea he was starting a revolution. Since then, travelling by bike has become a popular leisure and holiday activity.

Not every cycling trip requires super-human levels of fitness. Try these if you want to enjoy the ride without feeling like you're doing the Tour de France.

1. Biking and wine in Spain

WHERE: Penedes, Catalonia, Spain

PENEDES, an hour's drive south-west of Barcelona, is one of Europe's most diverse and exciting wine regions.

Inntravel offers a six-night self-guided Cava Country tour, visiting famous wineries such as Condoniu and Freixenet, along with smaller family-run outfits, where bottles are still painstakingly turned by hand.

Sweat rating: Expect to do between 20 and 25km per day.

Cost: From £795, including half-board accommodation, luggage transportation between hotels, route notes, maps and bike. Flights extra. Travel April 15 to October 31.

www.inntravel.co.uk

2. Superb Scottish scenery

WHERE: Inner Hebrides, Scotland

CYCLE along quiet island roads, soaking up the wild, dramatic landscapes. Wilderness Scotland offer a seven-day guided Road Cycling – Skye & The Inner Hebrides tour from the Isle of Mull, through the Ardnamurchan Peninsula and on to the Isle of Skye.

Highlights include the ancient abbey on the Isle of Iona, superb seafood in Tobermory and a tour of Talisker whisky distillery.

Sweat rating: The average distance cycled each day is 40km.

Cost: From £1,595pp (two sharing), including professional guiding, bike, accommodation and some meals. There is also vehicle transport throughout, including ride support and luggage transfers. Flights or trains extra. Spaces available for set departures from May to August 2018.

www.wildernessscotland.com

3. Stuck in traffic with giraffes

WHERE: Arusha, Tanzania

YOU really can safari straight from the saddle. Intrepid offer a new 13-day escorted Cycle Tanzania trip, mixing traditional game viewing with opportunities to bike through remote African plains where few tourists go.

Sweat rating: Terrain can be hilly and the climate is warm, so you'll need to be relatively fit!

Cost: From £2,145pp and includes accommodation, most meals, bike, support vehicle and activities, such as entry to the national park, game drives and Maasai village visit. Set departures throughout the year. International flights extra.

www.intrepidtravel.com

4. Free-wheelin' on an isle

Where: The Isle of Wight

AT 13 miles by 25 miles, the Isle of Wight is the perfect size for exploring by bike. It also has a cycling-friendly mild climate, largely unspoilt countryside and is one of the few places in England where you can still see a red squirrel or Glanville Fritillary butterfly.

Sweat rating: This can just be a one-day trip – it's 16 miles one way.

Cost: Hire bikes from Isle Cycle Hire (islecycle.co.uk), Yarmouth, from £15 per day.

5. Ride through a fairy-tale

WHERE: Bavaria, Germany

EXPERIENCE archetypal Germany on this eight-night self-guided Headwater Bavarian Castles and Rivers trip, visiting hilltop fairy-tale castles and lively towns with traditional breweries.

Sweat rating: You're looking at 45km per day in the saddle.

Cost: From £1,209pp, including accommodation, bike, all breakfasts and four evening meals. Luggage transfers between hotels are included, so you only need to carry your daily essentials with you when cycling. Flights extra. Departs every two days until October 14, 2017.

www.headwater.com



feedback

your say...

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

RSP is misleading over Manston

THERE is a plan that will destroy Ramsgate. We must treat it seriously, before it devastates our lives.

The threat is from RiverOak Strategic Partners who are planning to open a 24/7 cargo airport at the old Manston Airport site. Their plan will mean that we will have noisy and polluting aircraft flying low across Ramsgate. It will mean flights every 15 minutes over the town, throughout the day and at night as well.

Not only will this bring misery to everyone in the town, but it will impact schools and businesses, cafes and restaurants, visitors and tourists. Ramsgate will become the worst noise polluted urban centre anywhere in the UK.

Through their consultations, RiverOak are deliberately misleading the people of Ramsgate.

Firstly, they are pretending that it is the government which has asked them to include night flights, when they know only too well that it is the air-freight industry that will demand night flights. Otherwise it could never be viable.

Secondly, RiverOak Strategic Partners are pretending the aircraft will have no impact on the lives of those in Ramsgate. They claim that the only possible noise effect will be just 2kms around the airport. We all know that there are tens of thousands of people under the flight path, from Ramsgate through to Herne Bay, whose lives will be seriously impacted.

If you see this as a threat, tell RiverOak Strategic Partners.

Simon Crow,
Ramsgate

Airport claims are contradictory

WELL, I attended the RiverOak, so-called public consultations. What a shambles!

I asked three RSP people about night flights.

One aviation consultant said they were planning up to eight flights per night. One director told me he didn't know whether they needed night flights, but the planning people had asked RSP to include them.

When asked about the eight flights per night, this director refused to deny the possibility of night flights. Yet another RSP director flatly denied any need for night flights. Someone else spoke to Sally Dixon, RSP's 'aviation expert', who said no night flights, but it was the CAA who demanded it.

Pity they cannot sing from the same song sheet.

Of course, previously, RiverOak had said that up to 18 flights per night would not be a problem for the people of Ramsgate. Believe that, if you will.

James Baldry,
Ramsgate

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Ukip has made right mess during power

We have now had over two years of a Ukip council in Thanet which has been more marked by scandal and failures than any previous council in my memory.

From breakaway Ukip councillors setting up their own shortlived party to court and standards hearings, it has been one embarrassment after another.

To have a leader of a council in court for not paying his own council tax was unacceptable no matter what his excuses.

As a ward councillor for 22 years I have never been more frustrated about the lack of progress on many projects and the need to constantly report the same issues over and over again. I am not the only councillor or indeed member of the public who regularly has to photograph rubbish in the streets and alleyways and request removal.

The request to deep clean Margate footpaths in my own ward has been on going for months and some of us have taken to 'clean ups' ourselves. The constant mess outside the council office itself, with its rusty post box, is no impression to give visitors or would be investors.

The old Fort Hotel had £900,000 allocated to it for social housing by our Labour administration before the 2015 district elections but still lies derelict. Nearby residents and visitors to Turner Contemporary are greeted by this eyesore daily and would be tenants are denied a pleasant home.

The Conservative district and county council members unfortunately have yet to tell the public that whilst my Labour administration looked at ways to keep our 2011 manifesto commitment to Manston Airport their coalition government was supporting Lydd down the road.

All the public want from their elected representatives is honesty and dedication.

Cllr Iris Johnston
Margate Central, Labour

Speed limits at 20mph a mistake

REGARDING your article on Medway Councils proposal to impose 20mph speed limits [KoS, last week] one has to ask why?

These limits have been around for many years and started in the more Labour controlled areas of northern England.

Most people only want 20mph down one road and oddly enough they seem to live on that road. Once out on their journey, they want to travel at reasonable speeds and travelling times.

Where schemes have been imposed, there has not been no great rush of residents to hand in their cars keys and buy a bicycle, which supporters of 20mph says will happen. Ultra slow speeds, create more pollution and as for road humps, Imperial College London recently said they should be all removed from outside schools because of the pollution they cause.

Let us make this quite clear, mass 20mph zones has nothing to do with road safety, but everything to do with making travel by car as unpleasant and inconvenient as possible, in the vain hope people will be flock to using public transport or cycle or walk.

Terry Hudson,
Whitstable

Woo-hoo! Look who's back!

LIKE Michael Carr [KoS letters, last week], I also remember living under 'old' Labour governments but recall them rather differently to him.

It wasn't under Harold Wilson's Labour that the first miners' strike happened, but under Ted Heath's Tories who ended up of course asking 'who runs the country?' at a snap general election in 1974. He received the reply 'not you'; not just once but twice that year.

Earlier it was Wilson's Labour government in 1969 who tried to bring in reforms without going to anything like those which Thatcher did later, but was undermined by some in his own cabinet at the time. Further both Tory and Labour government's were hit by the then oil crisis which raised the price of crude; and it was Ted Heath and his chancellor who caused a mini boom and bust having relaxed credit controls.

Certainly the unions went over the top when Jim Callaghan broke with even mild Keynesian economics, but had he gone to the country in October 1978, he'd very likely have won and put Barbara Castle's 'In Place of Strife' plans in place thus avoiding the Winter of Discontent.

Overall, opinion polls of those days actually showed people saying they had high levels of satisfaction with life, had secure work, adequate social security, decent housing and foreign package holidays. Indeed that is just how I felt at the time.

Today we have had a massive financial crash; due to the deregulation which started under Thatcher; a lack of decent social security and dire shortage of council housing alongside grossly insecure and poorly paid jobs; steep rise of foodbank referrals and maxed out credit cards. These as well as a national debt which was doubled by Tory George Osbourne in just six years.

Thus, I suggest it's time we gave Jeremy Corbyn, in a coalition now or via the next general election, a chance to bring in policies to start to rectify the huge social, economic and environmental damage done by the neo-liberal Tories for decades.

Ray Duff,
Folkestone

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent



Waves breaking at Broadstairs

by **Rita Keatley from Canterbury**

To see your photograph printed, email **editorial@kosmedia.co.uk**,. Be sure to include your name, address and a contact telephone number. Unfortunately we cannot return any prints, and please do not send negatives.



holidays

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Swinging 60s to Mamma Mia Party Breaks

Selected dates from Nov 2017 to Feb 2018

3 nights half board plus from only £139pp

Join us for a trip down memory lane – for over 40s only – enjoying three fun-packed nights of live music from your favourite eras and bands at exclusively reserved Warner and Pontins seaside resorts with accommodation, meals and Free or Half Price drinks.

Date	Theme & Entertainment	Location	Board	From
10-Nov	**We Love the 60s Christmas Seaside Party** Marty Wilde, The New Honeycombs, Union Gap UK, Dave Grant, The Beatle	Pontins Pakefield Suffolk Coast	Half Board + ½ Price Drinks	£139pp
17-Nov	**Super 60s to Mamma Mia Christmas Party** Mamma Mia movie, Barron Knights, Swinging Blue Jeans, Roy Carter, Vivo & Abba tribute	Pontins Pakefield Suffolk Coast	Half Board + ½ Price Drinks	£139pp
1-Dec	**Mamma Mia & Super 70s Christmas Party** Mamma Mia the movie, Abba, Bee Gees & Four Seasons tributes	Warner Norton Grange Isle of Wight - car ferry included	Half Board + Free Drinks	£259pp
5-Jan	**60s Sounds Carry On New Year Party** Union Gap UK, The Cufflinks, Vicki Lambert's tribute to 60s divas & More	Warner Bembridge Isle of Wight - car ferry included	Half Board + Free Drinks	£239pp
23-Feb	**Suffolk Seaside 60s Party:** New Amen Corner's Bringing on Back The 60s Show, Union Gap UK, New Honeycombs, Roy Carter	Warner Corton Suffok Coast	Half Board + Free Drinks	£259pp



Channel Isles Explorer

7 days half board from £859pp

Guernsey, Herm, Sark & Jersey

By Air from Gatwick

27 Sept, 2017 - Quote: GJ-KOS

Situated off the coast of France, the Channel Islands offer stunning coastlines, picturesque harbours and a great mixture of British and continental cultures. This super holiday showcases the best bits with half board hotel accommodation in Guernsey and Jersey, visits to the islands of Sark and Herm and a round island tour of Jersey all included as well as free time to relax and explore on your own.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout • Flights with luggage from a choice of UK airports - supp't may apply • 3 nights stay at the 3-star Peninsula Hotel, Guernsey • Ferry crossing from Guernsey to Jersey • 3 nights stay at the 3-star Sun Merton Hotel, Jersey • 6 breakfasts & 6 dinners • Excursions as stated • Airport to hotel transfer on arrival and departure



60s Rock the Rhine Christmas Markets River Cruise

5 days full board plus from £699pp

Boppard, Rüdesheim, Mainz, Koblenz & Cologne

By Rail from Ebbsfleet or Air from Gatwick

5 December, 2017 - Quote SP12-KOS

Join us on a fun and friendly cruise down memory lane as we party to 60s sounds with a star tribute artiste and GN's entertainment team along the magnificent Rhine. Our cruise on board the 4-star ms Swiss Pearl takes in magical Christmas markets in the riverside towns of Koblenz, Rüdesheim and Mainz, plus the popular town of Boppard with a Christmas shop open all year. These lovely attractions are just a stroll from the ship, so there's no coach transfers or optional excursions to buy.

INCLUDED: 60s music themed entertainment programme • House wine, draft beer, juices, soft drinks, water, tea & coffee from the bar 10am to 1am daily, and served at lunch & dinner • Escorted Return Eurostar travel from St Pancras and Ebbsfleet OR return flights from a choice of UK airports - supp't may apply • 4 nights full board plus cruise on the 4-star ms Swiss Pearl • Transfers abroad • Services of our Cruise Director on board



Dutch Bulbs & Amsterdam Waterways Cruise

5 days full board PLUS from £599pp

Amsterdam, Enkhuizen, Keukenhof Gardens, Volendam & Hoorn

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DOMINANCE: Skoda remains popular with drivers after claiming another huge haul of awards



Skoda still top of the pile after latest awards haul

SKODA has the happiest car owners in Britain and models with real pulling power judging by its latest haul of awards.

In the Driver Power 2017 New Car Survey, the UK's largest independent automotive customer satisfaction survey, the Superb and Yeti took first and second place in the overall car of the year and top honours in their segments.

In total, Škoda was awarded 10 gold, silver and bronze awards and also secured a hat-trick of titles at the Tow Car Awards 2017. Confirming the brand's products as some of the best all-rounders for owners who need to tow, the awards went to the Superb and the recently-updated Octavia.

Now in its 16th year, the Driver Power New Car Survey generates results based on feedback from owners and delivers a true representation of what a car is like to own long term.

The Superb won gold in the overall car of the year and won the family car category. It also took gold in the interior and comfort and practicality and boot space categories and bronze in exterior design.

The Yeti took gold in the mid-size SUV sector and silver in the overall car of the year. A former winner of the Driver Power survey in 2014, it took bronze for interior and comfort and silver for reliability and build quality.



The Fabia won best small car for the brand's sixth gold award.

Steve Fowler, Auto Express editor-in-chief, said: "It's no surprise to see Škoda models back at the top of our Driver Power league table – the brand has produced a series of outstanding models that have pleased owners for many years.

"The new Superb does exactly that and takes a deserved first place, while the Yeti's strong showing, even as it's about to be replaced, shows that it's not just Škoda's most recent models that are satisfying to own."

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#At the end of the agreement there are three options: i) pay the optional final payment and own the vehicle; ii) return the vehicle: subject to excess mileage and fair wear and tear, charges may apply; or iii) replace: part exchange the vehicle.
With Solutions Personal Contract Plan. 18+. Subject to availability and status. T&Cs apply. Offer available when ordered between 4 and 17 July 2017 from participating retailers. *Deposit contributions vary: £1,000 on Citigo, £2,000 on Fabia and Octavia. Offer excludes Citigo S trim, Octavia SE Technology. Indemnities may be required. Offers are not available in conjunction with any other finance offers and may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Accurate at time of publication. Freepost ŠKODA Financial Services. ^No cash alternative. Private retail customers only. Available in conjunction with existing finance offers. £500 free fuel card must be claimed within 3 months of vehicle handover and activated within 3 months of issuance. Big Event free fuel offer terms and conditions and exclusions apply, see skodafreefuel.co.uk for full details. Offer available for new cars ordered between 4 and 17 July 2017 inclusive from participating retailers. Models shown: ŠKODA Fabia 5dr Monte Carlo 1.0 TSI 95PS 5spd Manual, ŠKODA Octavia Estate vRS 2.0 TSI 230PS and ŠKODA Citigo 5dr Monte Carlo 1.0 MPI 60PS 5spd Manual. Models shown include accessories at extra cost and may vary from UK specification.
Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 31.0 (9.1) to 72.4 (3.9); Extra Urban 44.1 (6.4) to 88.3 (3.2), Combined 38.2 (7.4) to 80.7 (3.5). CO_2 emissions for the ŠKODA range in mpg are 170 to 90 g/km. The advertised range is correct as of 29 May 2017 and is subject to change. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

Sharp new CX-5 cuts it in SUV sector

Mazda builds on the success of its best-selling CX-5 sport utility vehicle and is now targeting more premium models. Andy Russell finds out if it delivers

THE CX-5 is hugely important for Mazda. Launched in 2012, as sport utility vehicles took off, it marked a new era for the Japanese car-maker and is now its best seller.

The first sixth-generation Mazda, the CX-5 introduced Kodo: Soul of Motion design language and Skyactiv engine technology and accounts for one in five Mazdas sold in the UK.

Now, with increased competition, Mazda rises to the new challenge with the second-generation CX-5 - more refined, upmarket and even better to drive.

And it really is all new - only the engines have been carried over and the diesels have been tweaked to be quieter, smoother and more responsive.

What blows you away is the new premium look and feel to the interior and fascia – an area where the previous model fell short despite being user-friendly – with quality materials, tasteful trim highlights and twin stitching adding to the upmarket ambience.

Under the bonnet, the 150PS 2.2-litre turbo diesel is the big seller, with front and all-wheel drive - the latter only in SE-L Nav, offering plenty of mid-range punch and noticeably quieter when worked yet capable of returning 45 to 50mpg.







The 175PS diesel is AWD range-topping Sport Nav only but also has the choice of manual or auto gearboxes.

Meanwhile, the 165PS 2.0-litre petrol is smooth and quiet, which is just as well as it needs to be revved to avoid feeling flat.

In terms of how it drives, a stiffer body and tweaks to suspension, chassis and steering hone Mazda's 'Jinba-Ittai' car and driver as one philosophy.

New G-Vectoring Control momentarily reduces the amount of torque to the front wheels when cornering, switching a little more weight to the back axle to increase front tyre grip and give more precise turn-in.

Sport Nav, with big 19in wheels, is the best drive, with good poise and precision on twisty roads, but the ride is firm and tyre noise evident.

SE-L Nav is more comfortable - with smaller 17in wheels - but, while still agile, there's more body roll through corners. But ultimately, the new Mazda CX-5 is now good enough to worry premium models.

Mazda CX-5

Price:	from £23,695
Engine tested:	2,191cc, 150PS, four-cylinder turbo diesel mated to six-speed manual gearbox
Powertrain:	hyhyhyh
Performance:	0-62mph 9.4 seconds; top speed 127mph
MPG:	Urban 47.9; extra urban 61.4; combined 56.5
CO2 emissions:	132g/km
Warranty:	Three years or 60,000 miles
Will it fit in the garage?:	L 4,555mm; W (excluding door mirrors) 1,840mm; H 1,675mm

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The continuing growth of our business has resulted in a vacancy for the following staff:

Marketing Assistant – Dover

Full Time - 37.5 hours per week **Salary - £21k per annum**
Closing date: On going **Interview date: TBC**
Qualifications and Experience

- Maths and English GCSE Grade C and above (or equivalent)
- Dealing with local press
- 12 months' experience working in a marketing administration environment
- Social Media marketing experience
- Motivated, with ability to work under pressure
- CMS (Content Management System)
- Hold full, clean driving license, with access to own transport

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
David Osborne on 01304 222679

Credit Controller - Dover

Full Time – 37.5 hours per week (one year Maternity Cover)
Salary - £19,400 per annum (pro rata)
Closing Date – 03 July 2017 **Interview Date – week commencing 10 July 2017**
Qualifications and Experience

- Basic Numeracy and literacy GCSE grade C in Maths and English
- Previous experience of Credit Control environment
- AAT Level 2 (desirable)
- Experience of Healthcode and previous NHS or hospital finance team experience (desirable)

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Jo Jenner, Finance Manager on 01304 222691

For job descriptions and application forms please visit our website:
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Alternatively, please contact Carina Pieries, HR Assistant
Telephone: 01304 222687 E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

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We are seeking to appoint an experienced and dedicated member of support staff to work alongside the Assistant Headteacher with SENCO responsibilities to provide key administrative and organisational support for the SEN Department.

The ideal applicant will…

- relate well to staff and students, have strong interpersonal skills and demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence to communicate effectively;
- be able to liaise and communicate effectively with outside agencies, staff and students;
- be confident to work independently and multi task in a range of areas;
- have good attendance and punctuality record;
- be experienced providing practical teaching and learning support to students, including those with special needs;
- be a positive role model supporting students with SEN;
- be highly organised and able to manage their time well, when juggling a range of tasks;
- have experience in undertaking line management responsibilities;
- demonstrate effective examples of initiatives they have developed in an educational setting;
- be prepared to work flexibly and undertake overtime as and when required.
- Experience with SEND young people preferable.
- Qualifications in dyslexia and Irlens screening an advantage.

The ability to converse at ease with members of the public and provide advice in accurate spoken English is essential for the post.

The School received a very positive Ofsted Report in 2014 and was rated 'good' in every category. Thamesview is a new school build that benefits from innovative learning environments and state of the art ICT equipment. We are committed to providing high quality learning experiences for our students and to supporting our staff through excellent CPD opportunities.

Further details and an application form can be obtained from our HR Manager on 01474 566552 ext 1120 or email k.mcgowan@thamesview.kent.sch.uk.

Thamesview is a school where everyone is expected to do their best and excellent examination results reflect this. We benefit from a new school building that provides innovative learning environments and state of the art ICT equipment. We are committed to providing high quality learning experiences for our students and to supporting our staff through excellent CPD opportunities.

Further details and an application form can be obtained from our HR Manager on 01474 566552 ext 1120 or email k.mcgowan@thamesview.kent.sch.uk.

Closing Date: 10th July 2017, 9.00am
Interviews: Week Commencing 10th July 2017

CVs without an application form will not be accepted.

Appointment to this post is subject to a criminal background check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Thamesview School operates a no smoking policy.

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Mariana McCarthy trading as Reinstatement Services Ltd of 45 Hamsey Green Gardens, Warlingham, Surrey CR6 9RS is applying for a licence to use Whites Transport, The Hanger, The Loop, Manston Kent CT12 5DE as an operating centre for 3 goods vehicles and 0 trailers

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

QFE Scaffolding Ltd of The Arch, Morewood Close, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2HU is applying for a licence to use The Arch, Morewood Close, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2HU as an operating centre for 2 goods vehicles and 0 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 116 STOPPING UP OF LAND AT 222/224 BULL LANE ECCLES

I AM GIVING NOTICE THAT The Kent County Council as Highway Authority for the County of Kent propose to make an application to the Magistrates' sitting at Medway Magistrates' Court on 14/08/2017 at 10am for an Order under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish highway rights on the grounds that they are unnecessary on land at 222/224 Bull Lane Eccles ME20 7HW as edged red on the plan on deposit.

A copy of the draft order and the plan referred to are on deposit, and can be seen during normal office hours, at the main reception of The Kent County Council at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Any person to whom this Notice has been given or who uses the highway specified or who would be aggrieved by the making of the Order may appear before the Magistrates' Court to raise an objection or make a representation on the application. Any person intending to appear before the Magistrates' Court at the hearing of the application is requested to inform Carissa Humphreys by post to Invicta Law Limited, Priory Gate, 29 Union Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1PT, by email highwaydefinitionsearches@kent.gov.uk, or by telephone 03000 416285 before 4 August 2017 quoting reference number CHU/PH/KEN001:114211.

If you require further information or would like to discuss this matter, please contact Carissa Humphreys using the contact details shown above.

ROGER WILKIN, DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORTATION AND WASTE

highways england

M2 MOTORWAY – JUNCTIONS 4-6 (NEAR SITTINGBOURNE) TEMPORARY TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

Notice is hereby given that Highways England Company Limited has made an Order on the M2 Motorway in the County of Kent and the Unitary Authority of Medway, under Section 14(1)(a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 because works are proposed to be executed on the road.

The effect of the Order is to perform phased works as follows:-

a) to authorise the overnight closure of:
 i) both carriageways of the M2 between Junction 4 (A278) and Junction 6 (A251);
 ii) the road leading to the coast-bound carriageway of the M2 at Junction 4 (A278);
 iii) the road leading from the London-bound carriageway of the M2 at Junction 4 (A278);
 iv) the roads leading to and from both carriageways of the M2 at Farthing Corner Services;
 v) the roads leading to and from both carriageways of the M2 at Junction 5 (A249);
 vi) the road leading from the coast-bound carriageway of the M2 at Junction 6 (A251); and
 vii) the road leading to the London-bound carriageway of the M2 at Junction 6 (A251);

b) to impose a 24-hour 50 mph speed restriction on:
 i) both carriageways of the M2 between Junction 4 (A278) eastern overbridge and Rawling Street underbridge; and

c) to impose a 24-hour 40 mph speed restriction on:
 i) both carriageways of the M2 between Yaugher Lane overbridge and the centre of Silver Street overbridge; and
 ii) all of the roads described in a) v) above;

d) to authorise a 24-hour contraflow system diverting traffic on the London-bound carriageway to the coast-bound carriageway of the M2, between points 205 metres west of Bull Lane overbridge and 320 metres east of Vinsons Farm underbridge; and

e) to permit hard-shoulder running adjacent to the length of carriageway described in d) above when the contraflow is in operation.

These measures are in the interests of road safety while contractors undertake bridge works including bearing replacement, waterproofing, resurfacing and road marking and all associated works.

It is expected that the work will last for approximately 7 months starting on or after Monday 17th July 2017. The overnight closures will take place between 20:00 and 06:00 (maximum period).

The Order will come into force on 15 July 2017 and have a maximum duration of eighteen months.

Traffic affected by the closures will be diverted using the M20, A20, A229, A249, A251 and A252.

The temporary closures, speed limits, contraflow, hard shoulder running and diversion routes will be clearly indicated by traffic signs when they are in operation during the works period.

P Ryder, an Official of Highways England Co. Ltd.
Ref: HE/SE/2017/M2/127

Highways England Company Limited, (Company No. 9346363). Registered Office: Bridge House, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4LZ. A company registered in England and Wales.

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Gills finally wave goodbye to Dack

Speculation over the player's future has been rife for months

Football

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

BRADLEY Dack has left Gillingham to join Blackburn Rovers in a deal reportedly worth £750,000.

The 23-year-old, who scored six goals in 39 appearances last season has been the subject of much speculation over the last couple of years, particularly after winning the League One player of the year award in 2016.

Dack joined the Gills as an under-15 and impressed heavily during the 2011/12 season when he scored over 30 goals for the youth team.

Following the appointment of Martin Allen as manager, Dack started to assert himself as a first team regular, making his debut away at Bristol City in the first round of the League Cup before scoring his first goal in a 3-2 defeat away at Crawley in the EFL Trophy.

Gillingham went on to win the League Two title with Dack himself appearing on 24 occasions in all competitions.

The attacking midfielder continued to make solid progress; his goal against Sheffield United on the opening day of the 2015/16 season was a sign of things to come, and he was unquestionably Gillingham's star man as they fell just short of booking a play-off position.

In total Dack made 185 appearances for the Gills and scored 38 goals.

The former Charlton prospect will welcome his former team-mates to Ewood Park on September 30, before making his return to Priestfield on March 17.

Chairman Paul Scally said: "As much as we're disappointed to see Bradley go we understood that he needed a fresh challenge to further his career.

"He's been a fantastic servant to Gillingham Football Club and we wish him every success for the future."

As the club looked to replace his goal threat, they completed the signing of 22-year-old striker Conor Wilkinson on a two-year deal from Bolton Wanderers at the end of the week.

"I'm delighted to get it over the line; it's been going on for a while now so it's nice to get here and sign everything," he said.



DEPARTING: Bradley Dack has joined Blackburn Rovers

Pictures: ADY KERRY

Explosive New Zealand all-rounder joins Kent

Cricket

EXPLOSIVE New Zealand all-rounder Jimmy Neesham has signed for Kent Spitfires for the NatWest T20 Blast.

The fast-paced, fan-friendly competition gets under way on July 9.

The 26-year-old joins Black Caps paceman Adam Milne in the Spitfires squad which begins its 20-over season at The County Ground, Beckenham in less than a fortnight's time.

The left-hander has represented his country 68 times across all three formats and played in the Caribbean and Indian Premier League T20 tournaments.

He became the first New Zealander to score centuries in his first two Test matches: 137 not out against India and 107 versus West Indies in 2014.



COACH: Matt Walker

The Auckland-born seamer has taken 65 wickets in T20 cricket at a strike rate of 17 and an economy rate of less than eight in internationals.

The new signing said: "I'm delighted to be joining Kent Spitfires this summer for the T20 Blast. Tom Latham enjoyed his time at Kent and spoke highly of the players and supporters.

"I look forward to entertaining the crowds at Beckenham and The Spitfire Ground and contributing to wins for the team."

Head coach Matt Walker said: "Jimmy is an exciting cricketer: an explosive batter and a left-hander which will add some balance to our line-up. He's an agile fielder and is a very useful bowler in the middle overs who we hope he will contribute in all three disciplines."

Sport Shorts

» Email the sports desk editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

Ebbsfleet secure deal for ex-Arsenal prospect



HOME: Stonebridge Road

EBBSFLEET United have completed their fourth signing of the summer after one-time Arsenal prospect Myles Weston put pen to paper on a deal at Stonebridge Road this week.

The 29-year-old attacker has more than 320 Football League appearances under his belt and joins from League Two side Wycombe Wanderers on a free transfer.

Primarily operating as a winger, he can play down both flanks or up front and provides pace, creativity and a goal threat.

An Antigua & Barbuda international like Marvin McCoy, Weston also featured at youth level for England.

He came through the ranks at the Gunners and Charlton Athletic before breaking into league football with Notts County, where he won player of the year in 2009, and then moved into League One with Brentford.

After three years at Griffin Park, he switched to Gillingham in 2012 and was part of the side that won the League Two title in his first season.



CIRCUIT: Bosses fear it will create too much noise and smoke

Lydden Hill pulls out of drift championship

BOSSES at Kent circuit Lydden Hill have pulled out of plans to run a two-day British Drift Championship event next month over fears it will create too much local pollution.

The popular track, located between Dover and Canterbury, has decided the competition format of the event, which was scheduled for July 22-23, will generate high levels of noise and smoke, and fears it pollution would ruin good relationships that have been built with the local council and community.

Earlier this year, we learned the UK round of the World Rallycross Championship will be at Silverstone next year and not Lydden Hill.

Spokesman Pat Doran said: "We are sorry that we have had to cancel this event but feel we have made the right decision."

Dover make further additions

DOVER Athletic have now wrapped up eight summer signings following two more additions at Crabble this week.

Former Newport County striker Ryan Bird has put pen-to-paper on a one-year deal with an option for further year.

The 6ft 4in targetman scored six goals in 19 appearances for the League Two side last season, including one on his debut against Hartlepool United in January.

He joined the Welsh club from National League side Eastleigh where he scored seven times in 18 appearances, including one against Dover in the Whites' 4-2 win at the Silverlake in August.

Dover boss Chris Kinnear also wrapped up a deal for left-back Femi Ilesanmi - again on a one-year deal.

The 26-year-old made 45 appearances for fellow National League side Boreham Wood last season after racking up 70 games for York City.

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